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THE

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

CRITICALLY COMPARED WITH

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

AND FOUND WANTING;

OR,

A NEW EXPOSITION OF

THE DOCTRINES OF

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

IN HARMONY WITH THE WORD OF GOD,
AND NOT AT VARIANCE WITH MODERN SCIENCE.

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PREFACE.

It is greatly to be regretted that, in our Church, no provision has been made for revising its Confession of Faith, or Creed. No one looking at the History of the Church can believe that any Confession of Faith drawn up by the zealous but bigoted leaders of the Church in the Seventeenth Century, can be applicable to the State of the Church or People, nor yet to our knowledge of the Word of God, in the middle of the nineteenth Century. A Confession of Faith being the work of man, and not of the Holy Spirit, must embody the opinions and prejudices of the persons who drew it up; and however able and zealous these men were who drew up the Westminster Confession of Faith, they neither had that critical knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages which we now possess, nor had they that acquaintance with the different sciences, and the Works of God around us, nor of the habits and usages of the Oriental nations, all of which are necessary to enable us to understand a great portion of the Scriptures.

Besides this, newly loosed from the trammels of the Popish Church, they had difficulties to contend with, and prejudices to overcome, of which we can have no idea. It is not wonderful, therefore, to find them in too many instances confounding the teaching of the Old Testament with that

of the New, utterly forgetful of the fact that we are Gentile Christians and not Jews; and not recognising that, however binding that old revelation was on the Jew, it never was binding on, and never was intended for, the nations of the world—the Gentiles. That old revelation was limited to one small people, so long as it was in force, and was brought to an end, and a New Dispensation introduced, before the Gentiles were called.

Worse than this, however, was the frightful blunder they made in interpreting the Scriptures. Instead of making Scripture interpret Scripture, which they themselves confessed was the only true mode of interpretation, they interpreted Scripture by Calvin's Commentaries, interpolating a great deal of that false metaphysics or Philosophy then so prevalent; so that, instead of the Confession of Faith being an exposition of Christianity as taught by Paul, and the other apostles, it is something very different indeed. In fact, after these remarks have been perused, the reader will become convinced that one of the writers in the "Essays and Reviews" was not far from the truth when he said that "the Calvinist, in fact, ignores almost the whole of the sacred volume for the sake of a few verses."

The whole Calvinistic Theology, indeed, is founded on Metaphysical reasonings from single texts of Scripture whose meaning was misunderstood. The premises being false, the Theological Dogma which is deduced from these premises is necessarily false also; while all the passages which speak another language, and infer a different conclusion, are studiously overlooked, or their true meaning

perverted. In fact, the Calvinistic Theology is just that Metaphysical or Philosophical method of interpreting the Scriptures which prevailed from the Third Century onwards through all the dark Ages, when a false Philosophy completely obscured, nay superseded, the Truths of Christianity. Calvin's whole writings abound in references to the writers who so perverted the Truth, and show clearly where he derived much of that false Metaphysical Theology which captivated the minds of the early Reformers, because it appeared to appeal to their reason!

For these and other reasons, too numerous to mention, the Westminster Divines presented Scotland with a body of Dogmatic Theology which has cramped the human intellect to an extent frightful to contemplate. This is now showing its pernicious fruits in a tendency to a rigid observance of external and ceremonial duties, much spiritual pride, and high religious pretensions, combined with a complete absence of charity, and of vital practical Christianity, and an increasing undercurrent of immorality.

Living in the hope that the leaders of the Church of Scotland will see the absolute necessity of amending the Westminster Confession of Faith, so as to bring it into conformity with the Truths of Scripture, it is my desire to aid, in so far as a private individual can, in that good work. In the following remarks, therefore, I compare every statement made in the Confession with the Holy Scriptures. I do not, however, take the interpretation which the Westminster Divines were pleased to put upon the passages which they quote in support of their statements; but endeavour to show, from a critical analysis of all the passages

bearing on the subject, and from a reference to the original Greek or Hebrew, what the Scripture doctrine really is.

To render the work as perfect as possible, the whole of the Confession of Faith is printed in Italics by chapters and clauses, according as the remarks apply to a whole chapter, or to one or more clauses. And the chapters and clauses are arranged and numbered as in the Confession of Faith.

The Glory of God, and the promulgation of the Truth, are the sole objects I have in view in making these remarks; and I have been induced to publish them in the hope that they may set men to consider more seriously than they have yet ventured to do, the ground of the Religion which they profess. The bugbear fear of being considered by one's fellow-mortals as a person holding heretical opinions —not being *orthodox*, as the pharisaical phrase is—prevents men from daring to look at the Truth even when it crosses their path in the perusal of the Scriptures. No such unworthy fears withhold me from proclaiming the Truth. Entertaining the deepest reverence for the Holy Scriptures, I accept as the Truth whatever they clearly teach to be the Will of God, whether that may be in the way of fact or doctrine; and I firmly believe that, however long the Truth may be perverted or concealed, it will eventually triumph.

EDIN., 21 RUTLAND STREET,
25*th April* 1863.

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CHAPTER I.

OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

1. "*Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation: therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.*"

This first clause, which states that the works of Creation and Providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God as to leave men inexcusable, is undoubtedly true. But it would have been better still, had it stated more forcibly that the works of Creation, independent of the Scriptures, prove that there is a God; and, moreover, that they prove the existence of One God only—one superintending mind—one mind acting on one uniform plan. "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork:" day unto day makes him manifest

to us as if these proclaimed his existence in audible speech: night unto night force us to acknowledge that there is a God. These his handiwork in the heavens have no audible speech or language, yet they infallibly communicate that knowledge unto man. Psalm xix.

We cannot too constantly remember, that, as laid down in this clause, the revealed word of God has been wholly committed to writing. Tradition has no place in a Christian's faith, or Rule of Faith, however much the Romish Church, and her Twin-sister the Tractarian Church of England, assert we must listen to it. "Search the Scriptures"—that is, the "*written word*"—said our Saviour; and when Jesus was tempted of the Devil, he constantly referred to "the written word" by saying "It is written." Several of his discourses also were delivered for the purpose of showing how much Tradition had to answer for in causing the Jews to depart from Scripture; in some points, indeed, quite annulling its distinct requirements. Paul is equally strong on this point. He tells the Romans, "Whatsoever things were written aforetimes *were written* for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. xv. 4. Paul never says that any part of Tradition is from God; but in the power of the Holy Spirit he says, "All Scripture (*i.e.*, the written word) is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. iii. 16.

All that is necessary for us to know of the Will of God is therefore contained in the "written word;" and no Tradition is to be paid the slightest attention to, unless it accords with that word. If it accords with Scripture, then the Tradition is useless, as the Scriptures can do without it. If, on the other hand, the Tradition disagrees with, or contradicts Scripture, it is to be rejected as contrary to the revealed word; so that, take it which way we will, tradition is to be rejected, and the written word alone obeyed.

2. "*Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:* (see the contents of the authorized English Bible;) *all which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.*"

I cannot agree to this clause, for it is a wrong inference from certain words of Scripture; and by its erroneous interpretation has done far more to foster atheism than the most open teaching of infidelity.

Paul is our sole authority for saying, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," 2 Tim. iii. 16. But if we wish to ascertain the true meaning of these words, we must endeavour to learn in what sense Paul used them; for that will be their true meaning; and not that which we may be pleased erroneously to attribute to them.

Almost all churches interpret these words to mean the whole books of the authorized Canons of both Old and New Testament, and aver that they apply to every book, to every sentence, to every word.

To this I first remark, that Paul's words do not, and cannot, include one single book of the New Testament, inasmuch as, at the time when Paul wrote these words, few of the books of the New Testament were written, and no collection of those which were written had then been made. This is a fact so plain, and so well known to every intelligent reader, that it requires no further arguments to support it. Paul's words, "All Scripture," therefore, have no reference at all to the New Testament, but are limited to the Old Testament alone. Let us next see whether they even apply to the whole of the books of the Old Testament, or have a more limited meaning still.

In the days when Paul lived, the knowledge of the ancient

Hebrew language had become nearly extinct, and the Greek version of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, was the sacred volume in common use. This Septuagint Version is especially consecrated to us as being the volume from which the New Testament writers drew most of their quotations from the Old Testament. As this is the sacred volume quoted by Paul, then it follows that if his words, "All Scripture," mean the whole books contained in this Septuagint Version (and remember, he does not limit his words to the Hebrew version), they include all the books termed by modern churches "the Apocryphal books," which, they say, were "not given by inspiration," as well as all those which they term "Canonical," and aver were given by inspiration.

There is no getting over this difficulty if we accept the modern interpretation of Paul's words. Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Modern churches assert that means every book, clause, and word found in the Old Testament; that must mean, in the Old Testament which Paul quotes. The Old Testament from which he takes his quotations is the Septuagint Version. Therefore, if we accept the modern interpretation of the words "all Scripture," these words include both Apocryphal and Canonical books, as they are termed. Let there be no dispute about this. In the Greek Septuagint the books which modern churches style "Apocryphal" are mixed up with those which they term "Canonical." They do not form a separate portion of Scripture, nor are they kept by themselves, as is done in our English Bibles. Each book appears in its place as part of the regular Canon of Scripture. Thus: Esdras follows Chronicles; Tobit and Judith come between Nehemiah and Esther; The Wisdom of Solomon and the Wisdom of Sirach follow the Song of Solomon; Baruk follows Jeremiah, etc.

Modern commentators delight in ascribing to Ezra the

completion and arrangement of the books which modern churches now admit into the Canon of Scripture. Supposing this were the case (of which we have no proof), he could only arrange those which were written up to his day, and it would have required a divine revelation to inform us that the Canon of Scripture was then completed. If Ezra did all this, who added Malachi's prophecies? For there is good ground for believing that he did not live till 20 or 30 years after Ezra died! But the fact is, that there is not a single hint given by any prophet that the Canon of Scripture was to close with Malachi; nor yet that the history of the Jewish nation was to close with Nehemiah's narrative of the return from the Captivity. On the other hand, there is the strongest reason to believe that it was intended that the historical narrative, at all events, should be continued down at least to the Birth of our Saviour; if not to the destruction and final dispersion of the Jewish nation. Indeed, without such an account, our sacred volume is incomplete; as without it we are unable to trace the fulfilment of the prophecies in the destruction of Jerusalem, and final overthrow of the Jews as a nation, and their dispersion among all the nations of the earth; the most striking, standing miracle of the truth of Christianity.

These two considerations then,—*first*, that Paul's words, "all Scripture," do not include any portion of the New Testament, and *secondly*, that if applied literally to the Old Testament they must include the whole of the Apocryphal books also,—prove, without further argument, that Paul's words do not mean what we moderns call "all Scripture;" but that they must have a limited meaning. Let us, therefore, endeavour to find out what Paul really meant.

Paul leaves us in no doubt about what he meant by the phrase "all Scripture;" for he gives us a distinct definition

of the phrase, if we will only open our eyes and understandings to it. He says: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction, for correction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

Nothing, then, is Scripture, in the sense in which Paul used that term, unless the above definition can apply to it. It must, *first*, be a something which could be *given, or revealed through inspiration;* and *secondly*, it must be a something which is capable of accomplishing those high and glorious ends for which it was revealed or given. It is thus seen that Paul's own definition of the phrase "all Scripture," *limits Scripture to those portions only of our sacred Books which treat of the revealed Will of God.* Paul's own definition of his own words excludes all traditional or historical narratives, all genealogies, all references to physical phenomena, all didactic or other poems, all the wise saws of ancient prophets or sages; excludes everything, in fact, except the revelations of the Divine Will.

Conceive, for one moment, the utter folly of making such a statement as that the genealogies of men, or the historical narratives of the doings of men or of nations, events which had actually occurred, could ever have been "given by inspiration!" The very phrase "given by inspiration," proves that what was given, was something revealed which was previously unknown; and was not, and could not, be the ordinary record of an event which had actually occurred.

Paul, however, more than once uses the phrase "oracles of God" in the same sense in which he employs the phrase "all Scripture." For instance: "To them were committed the oracles of God," Rom. iii. 2. "Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles

of God," Heb. v. 12. The phrase "oracles of God" is, of course, strictly limited to the "revealed Will of God;" and thus corresponds with, and illustrates Paul's definition of "all Scripture."

But the fact is, not only Paul, but all the writers of the New Testament, ay, even the Great Head of the Church himself, use the phrase "Scripture" in the same limited meaning as we have shown Paul does—viz., "the revealed Will of God." Thus Jesus says: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." John v. 39. Does Jesus' definition, then, any more than Paul's, include historical, genealogical, or traditionary narratives? But Jesus does not stop here, but in other passages tells us more distinctly what class of Books he meant by "the Scriptures," most commonly styling them "The Law, and the Prophets." Thus: "For this is the Law and the Prophets." Matt. vii. 12. "On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Matt. xxii. 40. "The Law and the Prophets were until John." Luke xvi. 16. Both Jesus and Paul, however, occasionally use the more indefinite phrase "Moses and the Prophets," but still with the limited meaning of "the Law and the Prophets." Thus: "Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke xxiv. 27. In this place we have the phrase, "all the Scriptures," limited to Moses and all the Prophets; but in a few verses further on, Jesus more explicitly says: "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Luke xxiv. 44.

In these passages, then, we have a complete definition as to what Jesus himself and the writers of the New Testament meant by the phrase "all Scripture." *They limited that phrase to those parts or books which contained*

the revealed will of God; viz., the Law of Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets. All the other books bound up along with these in our sacred volume, even though penned by men who were occasionally inspired, are to be treated as purely human writings; and the credibility of all their statements is to be tested in the very same manner as other human productions.

These human productions, consisting of traditions of the creation of the world, and of the origin of man; the increase of the early races, and the events which befell them; the recorded history of the origin and increase of the Jewish nation, and the chronicled narratives of the deeds of their rulers, judges, kings, and prophets; the wise sayings of their sages, and some of their ancient poems; all these are bound up with the books, or parts of books, "given by inspiration," because without these historical and traditionary details much of the divine revelations would be unintelligible to us. But these other parts prove their fallible origin at every turn, and convince every thinking mind that they never could have proceeded from the God of Truth. Infinite harm has been done to true religion by weak-minded but well-meaning men endeavouring to prove that every statement in these must be true, and must have proceeded from the God of truth; and all this from their misunderstanding the meaning of Paul's phrase as to what Scripture is.

Just take the traditionary narrative of the Creation as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, and it will be found that assertions are made in it which never could have proceeded from the God of Truth; never, therefore, could have been "given by inspiration," because they are untrue. In that narrative the Earth is described as having been made on the First day, or rather before the first day. But the Sun, by that tradition, was only made, and placed in the heavens on the Fourth day! The Science of Astronomy,

which is just the intelligent reading of God's Book of Nature, assures us that all this is false teaching; for the Sun, being the centre of the Solar System, and the Earth only one of its satellites, the Sun must have existed before the Earth; for the Earth could not remain a moment in Space, excepting by revolving round the Sun, and being kept in its place by the Sun's attraction.

Again, we are told that on the Third day grasses with their seeds, herbs, shrubs and trees, with their fruits, were formed; while the Sun, which was to give light and heat, was not formed till the next day. This, therefore, is a most improbable statement, as these grasses, shrubs, herbs, and trees could neither live nor grow, certainly they could bear no fruits, if deprived of the sun's heat and light.

These circumstances, then, relative to the traditionary account of the Creation, prove infallibly that that account could not have proceeded from the God of Truth, could not have been "given by inspiration of God;" and no jesuitical reasonings will prove falsehood to be truth. Those, therefore, who insist that we shall acknowledge that every sentence, every word, of all the books of the Old Testament are "given by inspiration," damage the real truths of Scripture to an incalculable extent; because they foolishly insist that we shall receive as truth that which we can prove is false, and never could have proceeded from the God of Truth. These men, therefore, force us to reject all the books in which improbable, or impossible, or false statements are made. Whereas, were the inspiration limited, as we have shown it is, to the revealed Will of God, we can receive all the other books or parts of books for what they are worth, and value them as throwing light on the truly inspired portions, without attributing any divine inspiration to their narratives.

The truly inspired portions of the Scriptures require no

such extraneous and irrational support as that which modern churches would fain give them. They speak to the heart of every true inquirer after the truth. They prove themselves to be the inspired word of God, and his revealed will, by the very fact that they seem to adapt themselves to the varied state of his mind, to the varied amount of education he has received, even to the very age in which he lives. They never pall on the appetite like human writings; the oftener they are read, the more beauties are discovered in them. They are suited to the old and to the young, to the learned and the unlearned; and are ever varied, ever new.

But an objection must be answered. Modern commentators, too often men of but one idea, have endeavoured to show that the words of Jesus, "the Law of Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets," refer to the three divisions into which, they aver, the Old Testament was divided. That Jesus' words had no such reference, may be most satisfactorily shown.

First, The Old Testament was never so divided; and neither in the original Hebrew nor in the Greek Septuagint Translation, the only copies of the Scriptures up to the days of our Saviour, was any such division known or exhibited.

Secondly, This supposed division classes Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, which are all purely historical Books, along with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other truly prophetical books. But what proves that such a division never existed, is the fact that both in the Hebrew and in the Septuagint versions of the Old Testament, these two classes of Books are separated from each other by the Poetical books, and those containing the wise saws of the ancient sages. Instead of three divisions, then, these versions of the Old Testament rather exhibit four. So that, if we even allowed that Jesus referred

to three of them, it would still leave out all the fourth division, that is, the historical Books.

Thirdly, The mode in which our Saviour refers to "the Law of Moses" clearly excludes all other parts or books which pass under Moses' name, and confines his meaning to "the will of God as revealed to Moses." "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets." "The Law and the prophets were until John." In not one of these passages can the word "the Law" be made to include the traditionary or historical narratives of Moses; but is clearly limited to the will of God revealed in the Law.

But the fact is, the word "the Law," wherever it occurs in the New Testament, must be held to have the same meaning throughout; and in the whole New Testament it is limited in its meaning to the Laws of God revealed to Moses. It is this "law" which Paul declares was "abolished," was "done away," was "dead" by the death of Jesus. As the Bible is its own best interpreter, and limits the words "the Law" strictly to the Laws revealed by God to Moses, and never included the whole five books which we ascribe to Moses, wherever that word occurs it must have the same meaning. Jesus, therefore, and the writers of the New Testament, when they speak of "the Law," or "the Law of Moses," mean "the will of God revealed to Moses," and no part of the other writings of Moses, no supposed third division of the Old Testament.

How absurd, indeed, to imagine it could have any other meaning! Just conceive the folly of interpreting "the Law" as meaning "the Pentateuch." In that case, Paul's doctrine would be, that the death of Jesus abolished the whole five books of Moses, abolished the traditional account

of the creation, and the history of the origin and progress of man and of the Jewish nation! On the other hand, if applied to Jesus' words, "The Law and the Prophets were until John," it would make the statement, that the narratives of Moses and of the Prophets were continued till the days of John, when we know that they stopped at least 450 years before John was born. If, again, they were applied to Jesus' words, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets," it would make Jesus' meaning to be, that the two great commandments of Love to God and love to our neighbour were deducible from the historical narratives.

Fourthly, The phrase used by our Saviour, "the Psalms," has been interpreted to mean the third imaginary division of the books of the Old Testament, and it is averred that the word "Psalms" was used as meaning "the whole Poetical Books." Those who make this assertion aver that the Psalms were invariably placed as the first of the Poetical Books, and that when the sacred writers quoted these books, they named the first of the Books, meaning that the quotation was made from that collection of Books of which the Book of Psalms was the first. To this I reply, that this imaginary position of the Book of Psalms never occurred either in the ancient Hebrew or in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Scriptures, but existed alone in the fervid imaginations of the writers, who, to suit their own ends, made such unauthorized statements.

These writers were probably induced at first to make the statement that the books of the Old Testament were originally divided into three portions, from finding that Jesus, in the New Testament, only spoke of three classes of writings as containing inspired writings and prophecies regarding himself, and from mistaking the meaning of Jesus' words. But in both the ancient Hebrew version, and in the Greek

Septuagint, the book of Psalms is not placed as the first of the Poetical Books, but follows Job; so that, if any such division of the books of the Old Testament ever existed, the poetical books would be quoted as Job, seeing it was the first of these books; but they never could have been quoted as Psalms, because it was always placed as the second book of that supposed division.

As the original Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint versions of the Old Testament are the sole authentic authorities as to the positions or supposed divisions of the books, they at once authoritatively settle all the above questions; and convincingly prove that there were no such thing as three divisions of the books of the Old Testament. In so far, too, as the book of Psalms is concerned, it most commonly happens that it is quoted as "the book of Psalms," Luke xx. 42, Acts i. 20, or the very psalm is specified, Acts xiii. 13, 35.

Of course, on such a question, I discard as of no authority the opinions of Josephus, or of Jerome, or of Augustine, or of Eusebius, or of any other writer who notices how the books of the Old Testament might be classified. I have alone to do with the sacred writers themselves, and with what they meant by the words they used; and with the actual position of the books in the only recognised versions of the Old Testament, viz., the original Hebrew, and the Greek Septuagint.

Fifthly, There is not the shadow of a proof that when the New Testament writers used the words "the Prophets," they ever meant "the historical narratives which may have been written by the Prophets;" but there is the almost certainty that in every case they meant "the revealed Will of God communicated to the Jews through the agency of the Prophets." This is rendered as clear as can be (without actually naming the books) by the manner in which the

prophetical writings are referred to. They are referred to as containing predictions referring to Christ, and as containing the words of Eternal life. For instance: "And by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the command of the Everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of Faith." Rom. xvi. 26. That most certainly does not include historical or genealogical narratives. Then see the quotations already made. "This is the Law and the Prophets." Matt. vii. 12. "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Matt. xxii. 40. "The Law and the Prophets were until John." Luke xvi. 16. "All things must be fulfilled which were written in . . . the prophets . . . . concerning me." Luke xxiv. 44. All these quotations are meaningless unless interpreted as referring alone to the "will of God revealed in the Prophecies."

It has thus been clearly shown that Paul's words (the only words which speak of the inspiration of the Old Testament) are, both by Paul himself, and by every writer of the New Testament, limited to those parts of Scripture which treat of *the revealed will of God*. That revealed will of God, then, is the only part of the Old Testament Scriptures which was "*given by inspiration*." All the rest is the work of fallible man. These men, it is true, may often have been moved by the divine Spirit, may have often been the means of communicating the divine will to men; but the events which they chronicled, or the histories they narrated, or the genealogies which they penned, form no part of that which was "given by inspiration of God."

It appears to me that the question as to what parts of the Old Testament Scriptures were "given by inspiration," is so clearly settled in what has preceded, that I might be spared further comment. As some men, however, cannot see the truth even when presented to them, one other consideration may be referred to.

It will be allowed by all that the writers of the several books of the New Testament were under the immediate directions, or agency, of the Holy Spirit. If, then, they believed in the *plenary* inspiration of the Scriptures, it might be expected that when they quoted the Old Testament, they would be very particular in quoting the exact words of the original inspired Hebrew. Strange to say, however, they do not generally quote the exact words; and stranger still, they just as often quote from the uninspired Greek Septuagint translation as from the original Hebrew. Now be it remembered that this Septuagint translation differs in thousands of its readings from the Hebrew; and even in the chronology of the human race from Adam to the Deluge, differs by no fewer than 606 years!

It would enlarge this work most needlessly to quote passages to prove the above statement. The fact is known to every student of the Bible. But that known fact sweeps at once to the winds any absurd idea of the *plenary* inspiration of the Old Testament—ay, even of its truly and acknowledged inspired parts. Paul assures us, and we believe, that all the parts of the Old Testament which refer to the revealed will of God are "given by inspiration." But he himself, by altering the words of the original Hebrew when quoting it, shows that his opinion clearly was, that it was not even the words which were inspired, but the sense or meaning alone; for had he been a believer in *plenary* inspiration, he would undoubtedly have quoted strictly the very words, and always from the inspired Hebrew, and not from the uninspired Greek Septuagint translation.

Besides, if the writers of the New Testament had believed in the plenary inspiration of Scripture, they would never quote the Septuagint, which, as already mentioned, differs widely from the original Hebrew, and, like all translations, strongly exhibits the mind of the translators.

But those who insist on the plenary inspiration of all the books of the Old Testament, forget that by doing so they are blasphemously declaring that God is the teacher of error. Now, I hold, that everything which God teaches or reveals in his inspired Will is true; but it has been shown that, in that historical Tradition of the Creation, at least two circumstances are related which can be proved to be untrue, and therefore never could have been "given by inspiration of God." Yet these men who hold to the plenary inspiration of all the canonical books of the Old Testament, must believe that these untruths were dictated by the God of Truth. There is no getting over that difficulty, but by adopting the conclusions at which I have arrived, which are the only conclusions deducible from Paul's words, are agreeable to all the other passages of Scripture, and satisfy every demand.

Were it necessary, however, a few arguments might be adduced from some of the books of the Old Testament which I hold were not given by inspiration, but which are usually reckoned to be so. The book of Job, for instance, is a didactic poem, in which different speakers make assertions, one answering and showing the falsity of the other's conclusions. Of course the sentiments expressed by both speakers cannot be true. If the statements of the one speaker be true, those of the other must be false. How do those who hold the doctrine of the *plenary* inspiration of all the books of the Old Testament get over this?

Next let us turn to Proverbs. Suppose we granted that the first 24 chapters might have been written out by Solomon himself under divine inspiration, what proof is there that "the men of Hezekiah king of Judah" were divinely guided when in his day they copied out, and added from the 25th to the 29th chapters inclusive? And if they added these sayings of Solomon, why may we not receive

as equally given by inspiration, those contained in the Wisdom of Solomon, which, for aught we know, were also composed by that wise king, and might have existed in the same great collection of Solomon's writings from which the men of Hezekiah selected the few we now have in the forementioned chapters? If Solomon was guided by the Holy Spirit only to include the proverbs now found in the first 24 chapters, then it is clear that he must have been guided by the same Holy Spirit to reject those which the men of Hezekiah afterwards copied out and added to the book of Proverbs! It is impossible to get over this difficulty if we accept the doctrine of the *plenary* inspiration of the Scriptures; but the whole is easily and naturally explained if we take the common sense and only scriptural view of the inspiration of Scripture, which I have attempted to explain; and which this very incident proves must have been the view entertained by the ancient Jews when these additional proverbs were added.

The second clause of this chapter must therefore be altered to the following:

"Under the name of Holy Scriptures, or the Word written, we now receive as authentic all the Books of the Old and New Testament, as published in our ordinary English Translation of the Bible. We acknowledge that the Books of the New Testament were written under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit; and that all the parts of the Books of the Old Testament which refer to the revealed Will of God were given or revealed to man by inspiration of God."

3. "*The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the*

scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings."

After what has been said above, it will be seen that, in so far as the Apocryphal Books are concerned, it matters not in what light they be viewed. Some of them are necessary to aid towards the completion of the History of the Jewish nation; and a chapter or two from Josephus, narrating the destruction of Jerusalem, and final dispersion of the Jews, would render the prophecies more interesting to us, as showing how literally they were fulfilled.

All the Apocryphal Books bear the stamp of humanity upon them in every page. Nevertheless there are some things in a few of the Books from which we may derive instruction; just as we may from perusing a moral tale; and there are some sentiments which deserve to be cherished in the memory.

4. "*The authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.*"

This is true only of "the revealed word," and applies not at all to the parts of the Old Testament which we have already shown were not given by inspiration, but are the traditional, or historical narrations of events which occurred in the history of mankind, or of the Jews, or consist of didactic or amatory poems, or of the wise saws of the ancient sages.

It is, however, from not attending to this grand distinction,

and from viewing the New Testament in the same light as the Old, that a great many German, and other Commentators, have gone far astray, and have lost themselves in wild and sinful speculations. These men have endeavoured in especial to reduce all Christ's miracles to the level of human reason; professing to explain all by "natural causes," as they term it. These men have thus done much damage to True Religion, raising Rationalism in opposition to Faith—instead of acting like Paul, and bringing in the aid of Reason to support Revelation; and thus lead us by the twin Divine gifts of Reason and Revelation to attain salvation through a crucified Redeemer.

5. "*We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the holy scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.*"

This is, in one respect, a curious clause, inasmuch as it asserts to be true what it denied in the Fourth Clause. This clause in fact shows that the Westminster divines could not shake off altogether the reverence they had for the old Romish Church. In the Fourth clause, for instance, they

asserted that "the authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not on the testimony of any church;" yet in this clause our esteem of the Holy Scripture is asserted to rest on "the testimony of the Church." I cannot say that my faith rests on any such sandy foundation, for I have no faith in the testimony of any Church on Earth; nor do we require the testimony of any church so long as we can have the word of God in our hands, and let it bear its own testimony.

The rest of the clause is not true of the whole Bible, but only of those parts which treat of "the revealed Will of God." In fact, this clause is a strong confirmation that I have interpreted Paul's words aright as to the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and confirms, so far as human testimony can, all I have said as to those parts being alone given by inspiration which refer to "the revealed will of God." There is no "heavenliness of matter" in historical, or traditionary, or genealogical details; there is no "discovery of the only way of man's salvation" in such chronicles; there is no "consent of parts," there is no "entire perfection" in such narratives of events which had actually occurred; there is nothing in such narratives which "abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God."

But every statement made in this clause is strictly true, if limited to the parts which treat of the revealed Will of God. In these parts, because they were all given by revelation of the God of all Truth and Knowledge, are to be found heavenliness of doctrine, majesty of style, the discovery of the only way of man's salvation, and the perfect agreement of all its various parts.

The first part of the clause ought therefore to read: "We may be moved and induced by a perusal of those parts of the Scriptures which treat of the revealed Will of God, to a high and reverend esteem of the same," etc.

6. "*The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.*"

I reserve till a more convenient opportunity my remarks on what the Confession says relative to God's glory. But the whole clause might be deleted without any loss to the Confession as a creed. I have not been able to discover in any part of the Scriptures any authority for the statement here made, that "nothing is at any time to be added by new revelations of the Spirit." I was always led to believe, on the other hand, that Paul indicated the very reverse, when he so pointedly told us that the time would come when all the Israelites (when the fulness of the Gentiles had come) would be again admitted to the favour of God. This statement of Paul's almost of necessity implies a further revelation of the Spirit, because the present revelation has proved insufficient to convince the Jew.

This clause, therefore, besides being quite unnecessary, ventures on ground where there is no sure standing, and dares to lay down as a dogmatic truth, a statement on which

Scripture is entirely silent. All such should be deleted from a Confession of Faith.

7. "*All things in scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.*"

The above clause rightly holds that passages occur in Scripture which even the wisest and best of men, with all the aids they can command, will fail to understand or explain. Yet all that is essential to salvation is so plainly and distinctly taught, that the most ordinary intellect may understand and apply it.

If such be the undoubted truth, why does this very Confession, in by far its greater half, treat of subjects and Doctrines which are far beyond the capacity of at least half of mankind, viz., all children, all uneducated persons, and women? If all that is necessary for salvation be "so clearly propounded and opened in some place or other of Scripture, that the unlearned may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them," why did this Confession not limit itself to these subjects alone, and propound them all in the clear unmistakeable words of Scripture, in which it asserts the Scriptures themselves propound them? A Confession of Christian Faith should alone deal with the essentials of Salvation, and all these should, if possible, be propounded in the absolute words of Scripture. Nothing should be included in that Confession which is a mere inference or

conclusion from certain expressions, whose meaning the composers of the Confession may have misunderstood. Had this rule been followed in this Confession, it would not have occupied one hundredth part of the space it now fills; it would have been limited to the truths essential to our Christian Faith, and it would have avoided all that meddling with mysteries, and doctrines, founded on obscure passages of Scripture which different minds interpret differently according to their critical knowledge of the Scriptures, or of the ancient languages in which they are written, or according to their acquaintance with facts in Science, or the habits and histories of the ancient oriental nations.

8. "*The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, may have hope.*"

Few people are aware of the singular providence and wisdom of God in causing Greek to be selected as the

vehicle for conveying the knowledge of the New Testament revelations to the nations of the world. At the time when the New Testament was written, the Romans were masters of the world, and their language was perhaps more widely diffused than any other. Even with them, however, Greek was the Court Language, as well as the language of Philosophy and polite literature; so that every man professing to be learned had a knowledge of Greek. But had God in his providence selected the Latin as the language through which the New Testament Dispensation was to be made known to the world, a large portion of the present Revelation of his Will would have been unintelligible, or have given rise to interminable disputes, seeing that the Latin is a language utterly incapable of giving distinct definition to its expressions. Of all the Ancient languages, the Greek is the only one capable of giving distinct definition to all its expressions; and hence it afforded the very best vehicle for communicating the will of God to mankind. Its value to us, in this respect, cannot be overestimated; as in all disputes we must refer to the Greek Text, to ascertain the true meaning of the writings of the New Testament.

It has already been shown, in commenting on the second clause, that the Westminster Divines, from confusing together the inspiration of the New Testament writings with those of the Old, formed an erroneous opinion regarding the parts of the Scriptures which were "immediately inspired." It can be proved that the New Testament writings were made under the immediate inspiration, or aid, of the Holy Spirit. But I must refer to the Remarks on the second clause for the question as to the Inspiration of the Old Testament. The question of the Inspiration of each of these should never be confused together. The fact is, to the Christian it could matter little indeed whether the Old Testament were inspired or not in any part but its

prophecies. To the Christian, as will afterwards be pointed out, the Old Testament is for a very different purpose indeed than the New; and provided he accepts the New as the revealed will of God, and acknowledges that the writers in their statements were guided by the Holy Spirit, it would matter little were the Old Testament wholly unknown to him.

This clause, however, in the midst of its verbosity, asserts a truth which we Protestants cannot too highly appreciate; viz., that the Scriptures ought to be translated into the vulgar tongue of the people, that every one may have it in his power to peruse for himself the revealed Will of God. The Romish Church denies this right to the people, saying that the Church alone, that is, the Priests, can be trusted with the Sacred Scriptures; as the people are incapable of understanding them without the interpretation of the Priests or Church. It may, however, be assumed with perfect confidence, that if the revealed will of God really came from God, and was not the invention of a priesthood, it would distinctly state to whom it was sent, whether to priests or people. Let us turn then to the Bible, and see to whom the revealed will of God was sent.

When God revealed his will to the Children of Israel at Mount Sinai, he gave a few instructions as to how it was to be used, and by whom. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Deut. vi. 6–9. Here, then, though there was a distinct set of men sacred from birth to the Priesthood, yet

the Scriptures were not committed to them, but sent to the whole children of Israel. How could the people teach these Scriptures diligently unto their children unless they had them in their hands? This quoted verse, then, alone condemns the practice of the Romish Church.

But it stands not alone, for in several parts of the New Testament like directions are given. "Search the Scriptures," says our Saviour, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." John v. 29. Paul praises the inhabitants of Berea, saying, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they . . . . searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." Acts xvii. 11.

Reason, in addition, tells us that it is absolutely necessary that the Scriptures should be put into the hands of every one. Were the Church or Priest to answer to God for all our sins, and for all our belief, then might the Priests or Church presume to give us only as much or as little of the Scriptures as they chose. But it is quite otherwise. Every man and woman is personally responsible to God, and to God alone, for his belief; and must give account to God for his belief, and will be judged by God "according to his works." "Every one shall give account of himself unto God." Rom. xiv. 12. "Every man shall bear his own burden." Gal. vi. 5. "Every one shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour." 1 Cor. iii. 8.

All this necessitates our having God's revealed word in our hands. We never could be sure that we were obeying God's will were we to trust to any garbled extracts of that will which a priesthood, having other interests than we, might choose to give us. It is only by having that word pure, and by having it entire, that we can assure ourselves that it is indeed God's word and will that we have; and that we can solve our doubts and difficulties, by examining

for ourselves all the various passages which bear on any subject we may take up.

9. "*The infallible rule of interpretation of scripture is the scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.*"

The word infallible ought to be struck out of this clause; for even the greatest possible care in the comparison of different passages will not enable us to interpret some passages aright, not to say infallibly,—different minds, from the same comparison of passages, arriving at different conclusions. With this exception, I firmly hold that the clause expresses the truth—a truth which distinguishes at once the Protestant from the Roman Catholic, and her twin-sister the Tractarian. They believe in Traditions and in the interpretations of men. They do not interpret Scripture by Scripture alone, but take as the word of God, or as true interpretations of the word of God, the glosses, commentaries, and explanations, put upon that word by old Divines who belonged to their Church, and whom they style "the Fathers." None of these men were inspired. None of these men had half the advantages which the modern theological critic has. And why should we be asked to put confidence in any of their expositions, when the Scriptures themselves, when rightly studied, more especially if we take the aid afforded us by the original Hebrew and Greek versions, and the aids of modern research and science, will enable us to attain to a much better understanding of the meaning of any passage than anything they can say re-

garding it. I have always found that Scripture interpreted Scripture much better than any Commentator. Take any Commentary, even the most popular, and hundreds, nay thousands of passages will be found, where, from being led astray by his passions, his bigotry, or his prejudices, the Commentator has twisted a meaning around the passage which is utterly false. So it was with these old Commentators "the Fathers;" and if we were to leave the pure Scriptures for their philosophical perversions of Scripture, we should be even in a worse case than the poor benighted Roman Catholics.

Sorry am I to add, however, that the Westminster Divines, when they drew up this Confession, appear to have forgotten this important clause, and have in too many instances followed the interpretations, glosses, and metaphysical conclusions of Calvin and other leaders, instead of keeping to the pure words of Scripture, and allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture.

10. "*The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scripture.*"

This is a most singular clause, and unmistakeably shows the confused notions which the Reformers had relative to Liberty of Conscience. They opposed the Church of Rome because she allowed no liberty of Conscience, but forced her interpretation of the Scriptures on every one, asserting that her interpretation was the only true one. The Reformers very properly opposed to this presumptuous asser-

tion, the fact that Scripture was always able to interpret Scripture; but when they came to the all-important, nay, all-vital question, as to who should be the Party who was to judge of that interpretation being right or wrong, the Reformers stumbled. The clear deduction, and only logical conclusion, from all their premises was, that each man, as he was alone responsible to God for his belief, was the sole judge for himself. But the Reformers were as unwilling as the Church of Rome to let any one judge for himself. They had no idea of permitting liberty of conscience to any but themselves; and hence they persecuted with the cruelest hatred all who did not think with them, and belong to their church. The leaders of the Protestants wished themselves to be the sole judges of what was the true interpretation of Scripture; but after their protest against the Romish Church, or its Councils, or its Pope, being the sole judge, they dared not assert that the General Assembly, or any Church Court of the Protestant Church, should have this power. They therefore came to that most impotent conclusion which this clause bears,—which, however, only concealed their true views; for in the 4th clause of the 20th Chapter of this very Confession, they affirm that all who conform not to their views "*may be proceeded against both by Church Censures and by the power of the Civil Magistrate!*"

It is hence seen that the Reformers allowed no man the right of private Judgment, and did not acknowledge the truth of this their own clause, that the sole judge of the right interpretation of Scripture was the Holy Spirit. This clause was therefore a pure blind, a delusion, a snare. The Reformers not only brought against every man who differed from them the whole merciless powers of their Church, but they called in the aids of the civil power, in order that they might burn, hang, or torture the offender, and sequestrate

his property. Such was the tolerant spirit of the Old Reformers. Such is the charity which this Confession of Faith enjoins. Such is the doctrine which this Confession of Faith teaches, and wishes us to believe is according to the revealed word, the charity of the gospel!

From this, then, it is quite apparent that the Reformers left the Reformation incomplete on that very point where it was most necessary that it should have been complete. Their whole premises, their whole arguments, lead to the infallible conclusion, that "*Every man must interpret Scripture for himself,*" and is alone responsible to God for the interpretation which he puts upon it; but that he ought to take Scripture alone as the interpreter of Scripture, bringing to his aid all such helps as are within his reach, and more especially refer to the Scriptures in the tongues in which they were originally written.

This clause, therefore, ought to have proclaimed as the inalienable right of Man, "*the Liberty of Private Judgment;*" and any Religious Reformation is incomplete which does not grant this as one of its fundamental propositions.

CHAPTER II.

OF GOD, AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

1. "*There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute,*

working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty."

No one, I think, can read the above clause without being struck with the impiety and presumption of fallible man presuming to give both a description of the person of God, and of his qualities, character, and attributes. When a Confession of Faith ventures on a description of God, or his attributes, it ought to be very concise, and only use the exact words of Scripture which mention such attributes, or give such description. We can know nothing of God, his nature, or his attributes, but from what he has been pleased to reveal unto us; and it is both impiety, and daring presumption, in man to venture to ascribe to that Great Being, a nature, or character, or attributes, which are not distinctly revealed to us in the Scriptures.

For instance, in the above clause, the Westminster Divines assert that God is "without body, parts, or Passions." I have carefully examined the Scriptures with the view of discovering whether there was any passage which made such a statement, or even allowed such a conclusion to be deduced from it, but I can find none; and the texts quoted in the Confession, as those from which the Westminster Divines drew such a conclusion, have not the most distant bearing on the subject. Because God at Mount Sinai did not show himself to Moses in a definite form, it by no means follows that God has no definite shape. God had a specific object in view in not making himself known

to the Israelites in any definite shape. Their tendency to idolatry was such, that had God manifested himself to them in any definite shape, they would immediately have filled the camp with idols of that form. See what they even did when Moses failed to come down from the Mount as soon as they expected him. They made a Calf of Gold; and, be it remembered, they did not worship that as a heathen idol, *but as a visible representation of the true God.* God, therefore, to lead them to a purer form of worship, showed himself to them in no visible definite shape, but as a flame of fire, and smoke, things which they could not represent in a tangible form. All this, however, proves nothing as to God's true shape or form.

All analogy would go to show that God must have a form or shape; and we have this conclusion fully borne out by the fact, that when he created Man, we are distinctly informed that Man was made in the image of God. "Let us make Man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created Man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Gen. i. 26, 27. We read to the same effect in Corinthians: "Man is the image and glory of God," 1 Cor. xi. 7; and in Hebrews, that Jesus, as seen on Earth, was "the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3.

That these phrases really mean the external likeness or shape of God, and not that imaginary purity which divines delight to imagine it alone to be, is conclusively proved by the Scriptures. Thus, when the Sacred Historian records the birth of Adam's son, he leaves us in no doubt as to what kind of likeness or image it is of which he is speaking; for he first carefully repeats relative to Adam what he told us in the first chapter, as to his being made in the likeness of God, and then tells us that Adam begat a son in his own likeness and image, and called his name Seth. "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him."

Gen. v. 1. "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." Gen. v. 3.

Now, even the most obtuse intellect can see from these passages that the phrases "image" and "likeness" here both mean bodily configuration, or bodily resemblance alone; and as the very same epithets, or words, are used when speaking of Seth's likeness to Adam, as are used to express Adam's likeness to God, it is clear as words can make it that the form and shape of God must be something the same as that of Man. The same inference is deducible from Paul's words: "A man indeed ought not to cover his head, for he is the image and glory of God." 1 Cor. xi. 7. And also for the reason given for slaying the murderer, because he has defaced "the image of God." Gen. ix. 6. These two quotations, as they apply to fallen man, cannot mean any imaginary spiritual likeness or purity, as divines assert, which, be it remembered, they assert and allow, was lost at the fall. They must and can only mean a bodily configuration or bodily likeness. Murder never could deface any spiritual likeness to God, any imaginary purity; it only could destroy the mortal body which was made in the external form or likeness of God.

It follows from this as a logical and irresistible conclusion, that God must have a body, with parts or members. It is quite true that we cannot understand how an invisible spirit, filling, as we conceive, all space, and present everywhere, can have a distinct body or members. But the fact is, we can know nothing of God but from what he has been pleased to reveal to us; and if he has distinctly revealed to us that man in his bodily shape was made after the likeness of God, then we must believe that God's form or shape is the same as man's, whether we can comprehend

it or not. If we believe that, as the teaching of Scripture, then we must reject, as contrary to Scripture, those presumptuous statements in the Confession, which pretends to be wise beyond what is written.

Besides, have we not constant reference in the Scriptures to the face of God, to his hands, his feet, his arms, etc.? Have we not also the statement that God sits on his throne in the highest heavens, surrounded by all the Angelic Host? Such passages are perfectly unintelligible unless we acknowledge God to have a body and members.

The words commented on must therefore be deleted from the Confession as unscriptural.

But I am not done with these words. The Westminster divines, to support their statement, made a most curious misapplication of a passage of Scripture: "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Luke xxiv. 39. Now, I at once concede that a Spirit has not flesh and bones as a human being, or an animal, has. But flesh and bones are not necessary to constitute a definite body. Flesh and bones, or a fleshly body, are merely gases in one particular form of condensation, but yet in such a state of forced cohesion, or combination, that it is only the principle of Life which retains them in that form. The moment life is extinguished, the corporeal body begins to resolve itself into its original gases; yet, when so resolved, these gases are as truly substances as when they are condensed into the form of flesh and bones. Will any one tell me that the Angels have not definite bodies? If they had not each of them bodies of a definite form, how could they constitute separate beings? For my part, I have no doubt whatever that the bodies of all angels are composed of gases of some kind, held together by some principle analogous to, yet different from, that which retains the gases in their solid form in our corporeal bodies. Were

it the will of God that the gases which compose our corporeal bodies should unite in different combinations, then our bodies might possess all the properties which we ascribe to Spirits. They might be invisible to the human eye; they might possess the power of passing through the smallest crevice, as ordinary gases can; and they might be able, at the will of the individual, to assume the solid form, and become visible to human eyes, and bear handling, so as not to be detected from ordinary flesh. Any one conversant with chemistry knows that all this is possible; and all this could easily be done by the elements being merely differently arranged and combined by the will of God.

But we don't require to speculate on such a possibility, because God has actually shown us such a transmuted human body in the resurrection-body of Jesus Christ. His body, after his resurrection, retained the same shape, likeness, colour, touch, as before his death; in fact, it retained all the visible and apparent properties of a corporeal body of flesh and blood, so that it was at once recognised by his disciples, and bore the handling of Thomas. Yet that body had all the properties, *at the same time*, of a spiritual body. It became invisible whenever Jesus wished it. When the doors were shut and locked for fear of the Jews, and no purely human body could have entered, Jesus suddenly stood in the midst of his disciples. The body which then appeared to them to be the fleshly body of Jesus, had suddenly passed through chinks which could only admit air; and yet that body, which appeared so solid, so fleshly, which their very hands handled, and which partook of food with them, vanished from their eyes as they looked on it, departing as mysteriously as it entered.

From this view, also, we see how false a conclusion the Westminster Divines drew from the words of our Saviour relative to his body when he caused it to assume the sem-

blance of flesh. It has no bearing whatever on the point as to whether God has a body or not.

The fact is, in making the assertion, that "God is without body or parts," the Westminster Divines have allowed themselves to be quite carried away from the truths of Scripture by seeing the Holy Writings through the misty glass of Calvin; and even then misunderstanding completely what Calvin said! Calvin reasoned, that because God showed himself in no certain or definite form, it is contrary to Scripture to make images of God in the form of a man or of any creature. But the chapter is headed, "Unlawfulness of ascribing to God a visible form;" and the Westminster Divines, more familiar, perhaps, with its title than with its contents, became more Calvinistic than Calvin himself, and made the above assertion, which we have just proved is contrary to Scripture.

The most objectionable part of this clause is where it avers that "God has no passions;" and yet, like every other imperfect work of man, the clause condemns itself by ending with the declaration, that "God hates all sin." I find no authority in the Scriptures for saying that God has no passions; because the Bible is full of passages declaring the very reverse.

It is quite true that all passions as we see them in fallen man, are, or may be, debased and mixed with sin. But even in man they are not even necessarily sinful, and are often the very reverse. And is there a single man living who is so debased in his conceptions as not to be able to imagine all passions co-existing in a perfect being, and yet without sin?

Is Love, for instance, not a passion?—a passion of the strongest, highest, holiest kind? And do the Scriptures not represent God as exhibiting the passion of Love? "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Jer. xxxi. 3.

"The kindness and Love of God appeared." Tit. iii. 4. "Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." 1 John iv. 10. "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." 1 John iv. 16. "Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John iii. 1. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." John iii. 16. And then, as if all these powerfully expressed passages were insufficient to express the depth of the passion of the Love of God towards us, John ends with, "God is Love." 1 John iv. 16.

Let us next see whether the Scriptures do not speak an equally plain language relative to the opposite passion, Anger, or Hatred. "The Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger." Josh. vii. 26. "His anger endureth but a moment." Ps. xxx. 5. "Many a time turned he his anger away." Ps. lxxviii. 38. "He cast on them the fierceness of his anger." Ps. lxxviii. 49. "The Lord poured on him the fury of his anger." Isa. xlii. 25. "The Lord will come to render his anger with fury." Isa. lxvi. 15. "Mine anger hath been poured on Jerusalem." Jer. xlii. 18. "Through the anger of the Lord it came to pass." Jer. lii. 3. "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses." Exod. iv. 14. "They have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger." Isa. i. 4. "Do not this abominable thing that I hate." Jer. xliv. 4. "All these are things that I hate, saith the Lord." Zech. viii. 17. "Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Rev. ii. 6.

Now, I know not the meaning of language if these, and thousands of similar passages in the Scriptures, do not convey to us the knowledge that God has passions. But his passions and ours will be in very different cases, seeing that his Passions will be under the restraint of, and be guarded by, infinite Wisdom and Justice, which ours, alas!

cannot pretend to be. The Westminster Divines no doubt asserted that God had no passions, because they imagined that they were thus magnifying his character; whereas, they were, without knowing it, greatly lowering it. A God without passions could have no community with his creatures. The Westminster Divines evidently considered all passion to be Sin. This, however, is neither true Christianity nor true Religion. God has implanted passions in our hearts that they may be used for his glory, seeing they are the reflections of his own. No passion is sinful in itself. It is no more sinful to love or to be angry, than it is to eat or to drink. It is carrying the passion to an extreme that constitutes the sin; just as gluttony and drunkenness are the sinful excesses of eating and drinking. Even with fallible man, neither loving, nor being angry, are in themselves sinful; else the Scriptures would not command us so often to show love. "These things I command you, that ye love one another." John xv. 17. Neither would they equally distinctly tell us to hate. "Be ye angry, and sin not." Eph. iv. 26. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Ps. xc. 10.

There is another very objectionable statement made in this clause; it says that God "worketh all things for his own glory." Beyond a doubt, there is no authority whatever for such a statement in the Sacred Scriptures; and to attribute such a character to God, with the view of magnifying him, as no doubt the Westminster Divines intended to do, has the very reverse effect, as it attributes a character to God which we despise in our fellow-mortals. But Scripture makes no such statement. Everything which God does manifests to us his glory; and all that we, his rational creatures, do on earth, is to be done for the glory of God. This is the sole Scripture statement, and very different is it from that made in the Confession. "The Earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Num.

xiv. 21. "The heavens declare the glory of God." Ps. xix. 1. "The Lord shall appear in his glory." Ps. cii. 16. "Do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. x. 31. "The thanksgivings of many redound to the glory of God." 2 Cor. iv. 15. "Confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 11. We despise a fellow-mortal who seems to be living for his own glory; and whatever the Westminster Divines may assert, I don't think it would increase our veneration did we find that God did that very thing which we despise in our fellow-worms. But the fact is, the Scriptures make no such statement;—so that these words must be deleted from this prolix confession wherever they occur.

The other parts of the clause may be agreed to, though I am not quite satisfied that there is sufficient authority for the statement that God is "immutable," and that he "worketh all things according to the counsel of his own immutable will." I suspect this is a misunderstanding of the words of Scripture. It is quite true that Paul, in speaking of one particular subject, uses the phrase "immutability of his counsel," Heb. vi. 17; and in another passage we have the Lord, through Malachi, saying, "I am the Lord, I change not," iii. 6. But I suspect we must understand these phrases in a limited sense, inasmuch as it is recorded, "It repented the Lord that he had made Man, and it grieved him at the heart." Gen. vi. 7. "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought he would do to his people." Exod. xxxii. 14. "For it repented the Lord, because of their groanings." Judges ii. 18. "The Lord repented that he had made Saul king over his people." 1 Sam. xv. 35. "The Lord repented for this. This also shall not be, saith the Lord God." Amos vii. 6. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." Jonah iii. 10.

But, besides all this, have we not the most convincing proofs of a change of will to suit changed conditions, in the fact that the Laws which God laid down for the Jewish nation are all now abolished and done away, and a new set of laws, quite diverse, introduced for the regulation of the Christian Church? All such phrases, then, as that under discussion, must be understood in a limited sense, and not in that sense in which they are used in the Confession, which degrades the God they mean to honour by representing him as a cruel, heartless, unfeeling Being.

2. "*God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, not deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory, in, by, unto, and upon them: he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, he is pleased to require of them.*"

I have already remarked on the excessive wordiness of this Confession in its various clauses. I have already said a confession should be short, concise, and easily intelligible to the unlearned as well as to the learned. No confession

should enter so minutely as this clause does into the character or attributes of God, of which we can know nothing but from the revealed word, and which we are very liable to mistake when we draw conclusions, instead of keeping to facts. For instance, in this clause it asserts that God does not derive any glory from the creatures he has made. I beg to say that to my mind the very opposite is the truth, and that both Reason and Scripture agree with me, and not with the Confession. All the works of God manifest his glory, and proclaim his glory, which is almost exactly the same as saying that God derives glory from his works. Does Milton not derive glory from his works? or Shakespeare, or Macaulay, or Newton, or Wellington, or Nelson? Assuredly they all do; and in like manner does the great Creator of All. What else is the meaning of the few following phrases? "The Heavens declare the glory of God." Ps. xix. 1. "Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 11. "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Lev. xlix. 3. "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." John xiii. 31. "Whoso rendereth praise glorifieth me." Ps. l. 23. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." John xv. 8. "Thy people also shall be righteous, ... the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." Isa. lx. 21.

The fact is, the Westminster Divines must have had very confused notions as to what the glory of God was, or in what it consisted. Their assertion makes God a selfish being, which neither Reason nor Scripture do? There is much need, therefore, for the clause being amended.

3. "*In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father,*

God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."

When a creed or confession presumes to venture on the mysteries of the divine nature, it is only safe when it keeps strictly to the words of Scripture; but it has every chance of being wrong if it leaves the words of Scripture, in which such mysteries are so far revealed, and *ventures to make additions to that revealed word.* This is most strongly manifested relative to the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, which is taught in this clause. There is no such statement made in any part of Scripture, that there are three persons in the Unity of the Godhead. There is no passage in the Scriptures which gives the title of God to the Son; that title is reserved for the Father alone. There is no passage which, by any implication even, gives the title of God to the Holy Ghost. In every part of the Scriptures, when the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are spoken of in the same sentence, they are each mentioned as separate distinct beings; never a being one; never as being three Persons in one God, or in one Godhead. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19. Jesus did not add that these three are one God, as modern creeds presume to do. Paul, too, says distinctly, "To us there is but one God, the Father," 1 Cor. viii. 6; and he several times repeats this fact. Whereas, were that the truth which this clause professes to teach, then Paul ought to have said, "To us there is one God who consists of three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

The doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is a perfectly incomprehensible doctrine, and that is perhaps the reason

why divines are so much in love with it. But as the true nature of the God whom we worship is at the foundation of all true Religion, we may be quite sure that God has revealed to us in the Scriptures all that we require to know regarding that point; and has given us reason to guide us in examining that revelation which he has given to us regarding himself. It is by using our Reason that we can alone judge of the truths of Scripture; and Scripture constantly makes appeal to our Reason to judge of these truths, and also of the men who preach these truths. Even Paul, the Apostle who is our great authority in expounding and opening to us the truths of the Christian Revelation, says: "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say." 1 Cor. x. 15. "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." 2 Tim. ii. 7.

Now, we assuredly forsake Reason altogether if we profess to believe that Three Persons can yet be only one. Three Beings, with divine natures, are clearly revealed to us in the New Testament Scriptures; but the Scriptures are equally clear that there is only One Supreme God—God the Father. This Supreme God, in the work of man's redemption, employs the agency of two divine Beings, Jesus the Christ, his only-begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost; but that these are not what the Trinitarians term "persons in the Godhead, who are equal in power and glory," is apparent to every Reasoning mind from this, that not only is no such statement made in the Scriptures, but of Jesus the Son it is said, that he stands at God's right hand interceding for us; that his Father is greater than he; that he came not to do his own will, but the will of the Father who sent him. And we are still further informed, that when the end of all things shall have come, and he shall lay down his office as Mediator, he will not assume the position of equality with the Supreme God, nor yet become "very God," as

the creeds assert, nor yet be absorbed into him, nor form part of Him, but will assume the position of a subject, in order that the Supreme God the Father may be all in all. "Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that The God may be all in all." 1 Cor. xv. 28.

I, for my part, never can understand how any one who considers this passage attentively can ever dare to hold the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. Why, even every act of worship contradicts that humanly devised doctrine. We pray to One God only—the Supreme God and Father; we address our prayers to that Great God through the only Mediator whom he has appointed between himself and us, viz., Jesus Christ; and we pray for the Holy Ghost, that God may be pleased for Christ's sake to send him to us, to sanctify and aid us in our Christian life. Our prayers, our worship, are according to the Scriptures. Why not make our profession and our worship to correspond?

Much of the confused notions which prevail relative to the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, and which prevents people from inquiring into its truth, arises from the fact of the Translators of the English Bible having introduced into the fifth Chapter of the first Epistle of John, a passage which purports to teach clearly that doctrine; and yet, strange to say, that passage is a purely spurious one, and is no part of Holy Scripture at all. The spurious passage reads: "For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." The authentic Greek manuscripts only read, "For there are three that bear record, the spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one;" *i.e.*, agree in bearing one and the same testimony, viz., that Jesus is the

Son of God: and any one who reads with attention the whole chapter will see that John's argument requires only these latter words, and that the excluded words would have no meaning in his Epistle at all.

But the Translators of our English Bible also translated with a prejudice in favour of the Doctrine of the Trinity, and have dared to translate passages so as to imply the teaching of that Doctrine. Such passages, however, are mistranslations. Thus in the Gospel by John, i. 1, the English Translation says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." The original Greek, however, is very concise and definite in its expressions, and gives no countenance whatever to any such doctrine; for it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and the Word was a God; he was in the beginning with the God." The passage asserts that the Word had the nature of a God, and not that of a created being, but it carefully distinguishes the Word from the God; and, as if to guard against all possible mistakes as to the Word ever being confounded with the God, twice repeats that that Word was only *with* the God. No such statement would ever have been made had it been intended to be taught that the Word was the "very God;" for it is clear as daylight it would never have twice repeated that he was with himself, which in that case would have made the sentence utter nonsense.

Another passage of Scripture is equally altered from the original by the translators of our English Bible, to make it agree with their Trinity in Unity views—viz., Rom. ix. 5. The English Translation says, "Whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." The true translation of the original Greek is very different. It is

this: "Whose are the Fathers; and of whom is Christ according to the flesh: the living supreme God be blessed for ever, Amen." This passage, therefore, instead of giving any countenance to the Trinity doctrine, refutes it, and, when properly translated, harmonizes with the rest of Scripture.

It is not my intention to enter at large into the subject in this place. I may only mention that the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is quite irreconcilable with the declaration of Jesus while on Earth, and with his Revelation to John while in Heaven, after his Resurrection, that God the Father is also his God. We must remember that Jesus, during his whole life on earth, prayed to God as his God; and even when in Heaven, seated at the right hand of God, he speaks of "the God" as his God. "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." John xx. 17. "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. 46. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall no more go out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the City of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God." Rev. iii. 12. Now no pretended human reasoning, or human philosophy, can get over such distinct teaching. How, indeed, dare we set any philosophical reasonings against the distinct teaching of God in his revealed word?

But these passages stand not alone. We have the same truth, viz., that God is "the God of Jesus Christ," no fewer than seven times distinctly repeated in the Apostolic writings. "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. xv. 6. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. i. 3. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ knoweth that I lie not." 2 Cor. xi. 31.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. i. 3. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom." Eph. i. 17. "We give thanks unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Col. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 3.

Now no jesuitical reasonings, founded on any data which may be adopted as true, but must be false, can get over such distinct *direct* teaching. These passages all declare that God the Father is "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and as that is the undoubted Scripture doctrine, it must be false teaching which avers that Jesus Christ is part (or a person) of that God, or is the very God himself.

But there are a few additional passages which authoritatively settle such false teachings. God is from all Eternity. He is without beginning, without ending. But Jesus Christ his son is distinctly revealed to us in the Scriptures as having a beginning, though the Trinitarians have wilfully shut their eyes, and ears, and hearts to that fact. John the Evangelist distinctly says, "In the beginning was the Word." That means, of course, that point in Time when the Word was begotten of God. That this was a point of Time very different from the existence of God from all Eternity, is confirmed by Paul's writings, for he calls Jesus "the first-born of every creature," Col. i. 15. And in another Epistle, alluding to the same subject, he makes a statement which settles that point authoritatively; for he says, "When he (God) bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him." Heb. i. 6. This passage almost infers that the Angelic Host was brought into being before Christ. And again, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." Heb. i. 5. The Apostle John gives testimony to

the same fact, for in the Revelations he styles Jesus "the beginning of the Creation of God," iii. 14.

All these passages, then, thoroughly bear out the conclusion I have ventured to draw from the whole teachings of Scripture, that the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is a human delusion, having no foundation in the word of God. We see that the Scriptures plainly declare that Jesus had a beginning, while we know God had none. We see that the Scriptures plainly declare that God the Father is "the God of Jesus Christ." We see that the Scriptures clearly teach that when the world is ended, Jesus Christ will lay down his mediatorial office, and resume the place of a subject, and not of an equal, in heaven, in order that "the God may be all in all."

If, then, we be followers of Christ, if we believe the will of God as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures, if we believe that Doctrine which Christ himself and his Apostles have taught, then we will reject the humanly devised theological dogma of the Trinity in Unity.

It must be remembered that the whole philosophico-theological, but antiscriptural Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, is founded on the false assumption that Jesus Christ possesses all the attributes of God. We have just seen, however, that such an assumption is utterly unfounded; for while the Scriptures clearly teach that the Great God and Father existed from all Eternity, they at the same time distinctly ascribe a beginning to Jesus Christ the Son. On only one other divine attribute do the Scriptures give us any information as to its comparative perfection in God the Father, and in his son Jesus Christ, viz., the attribute of Omniscience; and they distinctly state that that attribute did not exist in the same perfection in Christ, as it did in the Supreme God the Father. See what is written: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels

which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father." Mark xiii. 32. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, *which the God gave to him*." Rev. i. 1.

Neither on Scriptural, nor on philosophical grounds, therefore, is there any truth in the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity; so that it must be rejected as a purely theological delusion.

Before leaving this subject, however, allow me to inquire whether any one who holds the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity ever seriously asked himself the question: What becomes of the human body which Christ took with him to Heaven, if it be true, as the trinitarians assert, that Jesus is "the very God"? That human body cannot become part, or a person, of the supposed "Godhead." So that if Jesus in Heaven retains that resurrection-body, as we are assured by the Scriptures that he does, then it is clear as reason can make it, that Christ in Heaven must be a different and distinct being from God the Father. That he must be, as the Scriptures represent him, the Son of that God, a being having so far the same divine nature, inasmuch as being his Son necessarily implies his similarity of nature; but he must be a subject, and not an equal, even as is the son of an earthly monarch; and he must always retain his individuality, else he neither could act as our Intercessor and Mediator, nor could he retain his resurrection human body. In no other way could that which the Scriptures distinctly assert of him be true, that when he shall lay down his Mediatorial office, he shall resign to the Supreme God that power with which he has been temporarily invested, and again become a subject, in order that "The God and Father" may be all in all.

In making all these statements, and arriving at these conclusions, I do not say one word which, even by implica-

tion, could be supposed to insinuate that Jesus does not possess the nature of a God, or is not a God. As the Son of the living God, Jesus must possess the nature of a God, and not that of a created being. Unless he were "a God," as John styles him, and possessed the general attributes of a God, he could not act as our Mediator and Intercessor. Were he a created being, even the highest and holiest, he could not be present *everywhere* to hear our prayers. But being the son of the living God, being begotten of God, having sprung from God, he must of necessity possess most of those attributes which we ascribe to God himself; though, from being a Son, and not the Supreme God, these attributes may not exist in Jesus in the same perfection as they exist in God himself. But on this subject I need not further dilate.

Short as the above clause of the Confession is, it blunders on other points besides the Doctrine it teaches. It says, "The son is eternally begotten of the Father," and "the Holy Ghost is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son." I should like to know the authority for the statement that the Son is *eternally* begotten, or the Holy Ghost *eternally* proceeding. Such a statement is simply nonsense. If the Son was, as the Scripture says, "the only-begotten of the Father," then it is clear to any but to a theological understanding that the Son must have had a beginning at some time, however far distant into Time, or into Eternity, that beginning may have been. He could not, therefore, be *eternally* begotten. Even the Scriptures authoritatively state the fact I point out; for John says, "In the beginning was the Word." But as God has no beginning, and the Scriptures here state the Word had a beginning —therefore the Son was not eternally begotten. John's teaching is confirmed by Paul; for, alluding to the same fact of Jesus having a beginning, Paul uses a phrase which

the Unitarians have misunderstood, and calls Jesus "the first-born of every creature," Col. i. 15; and alluding again in another Epistle to the same subject, he says, "When he (God) bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. i. 6. And again, "Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten thee," Heb. i. 5. John in the Revelations, alluding to the same subject, calls Jesus "the beginning of the Creation of God," iii. 13. The word "eternally" is therefore erroneously used in this paragraph, and must be deleted, as it expresses an untruth.

That word "eternally" is also erroneously applied to the Holy Ghost, and must also be expunged from the clause.

But the last words of the clause teach an untruth; for everything is an untruth which is not taught in the Scriptures. There is only one passage in the whole New Testament which speaks of the *procession* of the Holy Ghost; and as we can know nothing of the mysteries of Heaven but from what God has been pleased to reveal to us, we must believe the infallible teaching of Jesus, rather than the erroneous teachings of the Westminster Divines. That single passage says: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father*, he shall testify of me." John xv. 26. It is quite easily seen that the Westminster Divines confounded together the "sending" with the "origination or procession" of the Holy Ghost. The Scriptures alone state that the Holy Ghost "proceeded from the Father," that is, originated from him; there is no mention of the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Son; he is merely mentioned as being "sent" by the Son, a very different thing indeed. The pen must, therefore, be drawn through the words, "and the Son." If the whole clause were brought into harmony with the revealed will of God,

it would read: "God the Father is the only living and true God, who is Supreme over all, and who alone existed from all Eternity. But in the work of Salvation, and also in the Creation of the world, he employed the agency of two other divine beings, Jesus the Christ, who is revealed to us as his only-begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost, who is revealed to us as having proceeded from the Father."

CHAPTER III.

OF GOD'S ETERNAL DECREES.

1. "*God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.*"

The above clause ought simply to have said, "God worketh all things after the Counsel of his own will." It is a mistake similar to that in last chapter, to use the words, "from all Eternity." The Scriptures do not make such a statement; they only in one passage say, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," Acts xv. 18; and in another, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," 2 Thess. ii. 13. Both these phrases, however, have a very different meaning than the phrase used in the above clause, "from all Eternity." The passages

from the Scriptures, if we take the Mosaic account, only mean for a period somewhere about six thousand years, a mere point of time as compared with Eternity; and they only can mean this, that when God created the Earth, or rather placed man on it, he arranged in his own mind how events should occur in it.

It is arrant presumption in mortals to speak as the latter portion of the above clause does. But as the subject is treated at some length afterwards, it need not be discussed here.

2. "*Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.*"

This clause is at least sufficiently presumptuous. I don't know which of "The Fathers" proclaims such a doctrine; assuredly it is not the Scriptures.

3. "*By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.*"
4. "*These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.*"
5. "*Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath*

chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace."

6. "*As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.*"

7. "*The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.*"

8. "*The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.*"

The Westminster Divines got quite mystified with the doctrines of Predestination and Election, in themselves

simple and intelligible, but here rendered as obscure and mysterious as the wonder-loving mystical theologian could wish.

These clauses, though they no doubt were intended to magnify God, have undoubtedly the very opposite effect; for they unquestionably affirm that God does not act on the principle of Justice at all, although that is one of the attributes which the Scriptures always ascribe to him. These clauses, therefore, drawn up on a complete misunderstanding of the Scriptures, are disgraceful perversions of the Scriptures, and foul slanders of the God of Love; and instead of affording matter for praise, or encouraging diligence in a holy life, have the very opposite effect; and were men to act on them, they would produce a world with an utter confusion of all principles of right and wrong.

Why! what is it which these clauses affirm? It is that a man who is, what they style, "Elect," or "predestinated unto everlasting life," will be one of that number irrespective of himself, irrespective of his faith or his works; while no other man, be he ever so careful to order his life aright according to the opportunities afforded him, can possibly attain to salvation. This is virtually declaring that God is not a moral Governor, another conclusion contrary to Scripture; and it is also declaring that God is not a just God, but a self-willed being who cares not for the creatures he has made, and who, without any principle of Justice, chooses this, and rejects that man, irrespective of his character and his works, or of the condition of life in which he was pleased to place him. All this is directly contrary to the teaching of Scripture; for the New Testament everywhere declares that God's love to man was so great, that he even sacrificed his Son that all might be saved.

No one, therefore, who reflects for a moment on the character of God as revealed in the New Testament, can

for one moment doubt that the above quoted clauses of the Confession are utter perversions of the Truths of Scripture, founded on a complete misunderstanding of the passages, which are quoted on the supposition that they give countenance to the statements.

Before showing what Predestination and Election really are, it may be remarked, that I suppose every Christian believes that God knows everything which is to happen: and, of course, knows both those who will be saved, and those who will perish. But that the one class are saved, or the other perish, in consequence of this foreknowledge of God, and this irrespective of their conduct in this world, is what neither I nor any reasonable man can believe as at all consistent with God's Love, Mercy, and Justice.

In fact, were these clauses of the Confession true, then the Gospel is offered to man in vain. Were these clauses true expositions of the Word of God, then the sacrifice of Christ was not required; because these clauses assert that those whom God chooses to be elect are saved because it was God's sovereign will that they should be elect, and chosen to salvation, and thus makes their salvation to rest on their Election, not on their faith in a crucified Redeemer. But the very fact that the sacrifice of Jesus for the sins of the world was required, and that the Gospel is freely offered to all men, and that all men are invited to partake of it, and that that Gospel testifieth that "whosoever believeth in Jesus should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 15), proves that these clauses misrepresent the teaching of the Scriptures; and that Predestination and Election must be something very different indeed from what the Confession represents them to be. Indeed, there is one passage in the Scriptures which, without further argument, proves the whole statements of the Confession relative to predestination and Election to be erroneous; for it says, "Wherefore, the

rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure," 2 Peter i. 10,—thus showing that neither the calling nor the election inferred salvation, irrespective of the individual's own exertions.

As it is only through the Scriptures that we can know anything about Predestination, it is to the Scriptures alone we are to look for an explanation of what Predestination means, and not to Calvin's Commentaries, which, I must admit, are masterly pieces of reasoning on false premises.

Now there are only two passages in the Scriptures in which the words predestinate or predestinated are used, and in these passages these words occur four times. Thus in Rom. viii. 29, 30: "For whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Again in Eph. i. 5–14: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children to himself by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him, in whom we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of his glory. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye

heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

These are the only passages in which predestination is spoken of; and it will be seen from them that it simply means that the persons were predestinated to be born into the world at a time when, and at a place where, the Christian revelation could be preached to them. In fact, it simply means that they would be born Christians and not heathens; or, if born heathens, so placed that they could become Christians during their life.

The above quoted passages have no reference whatever to "Predestination to eternal life," as the Confession asserts, and don't even associate the two together. The promise of Eternal life is to those who believe; and is made contingent on their belief, not on any supposed predestination. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have Eternal life.*" John iii. 16. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." John vi. 47. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Acts xvi. 31.

Now predestination and Election are so very nearly the same thing, that we must next see what the Scriptures say regarding Election, or the Elect.

In the Scriptures the term "Elect" is applied to four classes of persons: 1st, to Jesus Christ, the Elect, or chosen of God to be the Saviour of the world; 2d, to the elect angels; 3d, to the nation of the Jews; and 4th, to the Christian. Let us see, then, what it means with reference to the Jews and Christians; but don't let us be carried away with a name, but understand distinctly that the word

simply means "*chosen*," and has no such hidden mysterious meaning as the Confession strives to twine around it.

The word "Elect," as applied to the Jews, simply means that they were "the chosen people of God," or "the people whom God chose out of the world to be his own people;" and it neither infers nor denies their salvation; and never infers that all those who were so "elect," or "chosen," were to inherit eternal life. Thus Isaiah says, "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine Elect, I have called thee (Cyrus) by thy name," xlv. 4. Again, "Mine Elect (the Israelites) shall inherit it." Isa. lxv. 9. And yet again, "Mine Elect (the Israelites) shall long enjoy the works of their hands." Isa. lxv. 22. "The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose (elect) you, because ye were more in number than any people, . . . but because the Lord loved you." Deut. vii. 7, 8. In the Old Testament, therefore, the word "Elect" simply means the whole Jewish nation, both good and bad; in fact, just the nominal chosen people of God.

In the New Testament, however, as a new dispensation was introduced, a further distinction was made; and the word "Elect" is generally, but not invariably, restricted to those who had become Christians; but the word "Election" is applied to all the Jewish nation, both those who obstinately rejected the Gospel, and those who accepted it. Thus, in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans occurs that long treatise on Election which the Westminster Divines, seeing everything through the misty glass of Calvin, so grossly misunderstood. Paul in that chapter shows, that though the Jews were the Elect people of God, most of them were to reject the Gospel, so that they could neither be "called to be saints," nor could they receive any of the Christian graces which were promised to the Christian. A small remnant, however, were to become believers

in Jesus. "Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the Election of Grace." Rom. xi. 5. And again: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Rom. xi. 7. Notwithstanding of their rejection of the Gospel, however, all the Jews were to be saved, though they neither believed in Jesus, nor could be called, nor adopted, nor justified, nor sanctified; so that all Paul's reasoning is directly the opposite of the teaching of the Confession of Faith, for he says, "As touching the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the Election, they are beloved for the Fathers' sake. . . . And so all Israel shall be saved." Rom. xi. 26.

There is, however, one important passage in the New Testament, where our Saviour beautifully points out the distinction between the Elect Jew who was to remain an unbeliever, and him who was to become a Christian. He applies to both of these classes of persons the term "Elect," but the one who was to receive the Gospel was, in addition, termed "chosen." Thus: "But for the Elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, these days shall be shortened." Matt. xiii. 20. In plain English this would read, "But for the sake of those persons of the Elect people of God whom he hath chosen to become Christians, hath he shortened those days."

A great deal of misunderstanding exists relative to Paul's notice of the subject of Predestination and Election, when he says of Jacob and Esau, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," and also gives reasons for selecting Jacob and not Esau: "that the purpose of God according to Election might stand." Rom. ix. 11. If any one reads the Chapter attentively, and not through Calvin's mystical metaphysical glosses, he will at once perceive that the whole chapter is simply to prove that God is the sovereign

disposer of all things, and that even in selecting the descendants of a certain man, Abraham, as his peculiar people, he, for certain reasons known only to himself, selected certain descendants and rejected others. Thus, in the first Generation, he chose Isaac alone, Abraham's legal and only son by Sarah; while he rejected Abraham's other six legal sons by his wife Keturah, as well as Ishmael, the son of the concubine Hagar. In the second generation, he selected the youngest twin, Jacob, and rejected the elder twin, Esau; while, in the third generation, he chose the whole descendants of Jacob, both those by his legal wives and those by his concubines. Now, that ninth chapter of Romans speaks only the same language as all the other passages where the subject of Election (or the Elect) is mentioned, viz., that God chose beforehand certain parties for certain purposes, and of course rejected the rest of the world. But all this selection, and Election, and predestination, had no reference whatever to the one party being chosen to Eternal life, and the other being condemned to Eternal death. It simply means that God selected or Elected certain people—viz., certain descendants of Abraham—to be his own people, on whom he might bestow more glorious favours than on all other nations of the world whom he had passed over. This, then, is the whole mystery of Predestination and Election as applied to the Jews, viz., that God was pleased to select, choose, or elect certain descendants of Abraham to be his peculiar people, and to become the keepers of his word; but not all the descendants, but certain of them only.

The word "Elect" applies to all Christians without distinction. Hence Paul addresses his epistles to those "called to be saints." Peter, in the opening words of his Epistle, refers more particularly to the subject: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers . . . elect according

to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 1, 2.

Now, in all these passages there is no *doctrine* either of Predestination or of Election taught. In all these passages not a doctrine but a fact is mentioned, which in plain language is, that God chose, or elected, or predestinated certain souls of men to become his own peculiar people, and did not send them into the world till they could be born either as Jews or as Christians. This, of course, implies that it was through no agency of our own that we were born as Jews, or as Christians, or as heathens; that we were born as Britons, or as French, or as Germans, etc. For instance, after God had fixed on all the souls of men who were to appear as Britons, and assigned to each the age and year it was to be born, he could just as easily have caused my soul to inhabit a fleshly body, and to be born, in the days of the ancient Druids, as at the present day. But of his own free will he predestinated—chose—elected me to be born in Britain of Christian Parents, as one "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

Now do not let me be misunderstood in endeavouring to explain this very simple subject in the only way in which it is revealed to us in God's holy word.

God predestinates the civil position, if I might so call it, of every soul of man. We have no choice in this of ourselves. We cannot make ourselves to be born Turks, or Persians, or Chinese, or Germans, if God has predetermined that we shall be born as Britons. Now God arranges all things orderly; so, when he has predetermined that a certain number of souls of men shall be born into the world, during any year, he selects, elects, chooses from that number those who shall be born as his "Elect people" the Jews,

those who shall be born as his "chosen sons" the Christians, and distributes the rest over the nations of the Earth, according to his own good pleasure.

This, then, is the whole mystery of Predestination and Election. God predestinates the condition in which every soul shall be born; but those whom he makes to be born as his own ancient Elect people the Jews, and those whom he makes to be born as his chosen sons the Christians, he dignifies by styling them "Elect," and "chosen," because he has chosen them out of all the other souls whom he is sending to be born of other nations on the face of the Earth, as persons on whom he might shower down his more especial favours.

This, then, is the whole mystery of Predestination and Election. A subject mystified by Calvin and his followers so as to be utterly unintelligible, and so as to be the grossest slander on the God of Love. No wonder, then, that the Westminster Divines in their Eighth clause said, "The doctrine of this high mystery of Predestination is to be handled with especial prudence and care." Truly they made it a high and mighty mystery; and yet they ought to have remembered that the Christian religion is not a mystery. The old Jewish religion was a mystery; but not such is the Christian, "for God hath revealed it unto us by his Spirit," and "by revelation hath made known the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Eph. iii. 3–5.

Don't let us, then, go back to the weak and beggarly Elements whereunto these divines wish to bring us into bondage. Let us open our eyes and our hearts to the truth of God's word, and cast away from us those metaphysico-theological doctrines with which Satan has so ably succeeded in obscuring the Truth. We shall find no inconsistencies

in the pure Word of God. We shall not find God in one place freely offering salvation to all who believe, and declaring in another part that only those shall be saved who were elected or chosen for that end from the foundation of the world. What the Westminster Divines call their doctrine of Predestination and Election, is contrary to the whole tenor of the Gospel scheme of salvation, and is thoroughly to be detested and abhorred.

It may merely here be further remarked, that the Westminster Divines got so thoroughly mystified by Calvin's metaphysico-theological writings, that they pass off as Gospel teaching, in the sixth clause, that which is rank heresy; as any one may easily convince himself by comparing the statements there made with Paul's eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Paul in that chapter tells us by the Spirit that the whole of the Jews, though in unbelief, will be saved, "and so all Israel shall be saved." He tells us, moreover, that all these unbelieving Jews are "Elect." It is thus apparent even to a very shallow capacity, that if these Jews do not believe in Christ, they cannot be "called," or "effectually called unto faith in Christ," for they have no faith in him. And if they are not called, they cannot be adopted, justified, and sanctified, as these terms or conditions only apply to those who have been called by a preacher to the knowledge of Jesus Christ; that is to say, have become Christians.

Jesus was surely a much better judge of what Election meant than the Westminster Divines. But Jesus did not preach at one time that eternal life was conferred by being one of the Elect, and at another time that it depended on a man's belief. That was a refinement and a distinction reserved for the Westminster Divines. The doctrine which Jesus and his Apostles alone taught was, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoso-

ever believeth in him should not perish, but have Eternal life." John iii. 16. But Jesus taught more than this: he taught a doctrine the very opposite of that taught by the Westminster Divines regarding the eternal salvation of the elect, and of them alone; for, addressing the Elect people of God, he said, "Ye shall die in your sins. . . . . I said therefore, ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John viii. 21, 24. Here, then, Jesus announces to the elect people of God that there is no hope of escaping the punishment due for their sins but by believing in him. Their Election served them, and was to serve them nothing at the Great Day of Judgment; their belief everything.

Peter's words preach the very same doctrine: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure," 2 Peter i. 10; a sentence which proves that the calling and the election merely put the persons in the way of grace, and did not confer that grace of Eternal life.

All these quotations, and all that reasoning, therefore, prove that I have rightly interpreted the Scriptures as to what Predestination and Election really are; and that the Confession teaches error in all that it states relative to these subjects.

The above Remarks must be read in connection with those on Chap. X., where the subjects of Predestination and Election are continued.

CHAPTER IV.

OF CREATION.

1. "*It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.*"

After what has been said relative to the word "eternal" in other clauses, it is manifest that the Westminster Divines misemployed it, and that it ought to be struck out of every sentence where it occurs, and therefore out of the above clause.

Short as is this clause of the Confession, it says too much, and what is said is a misrepresentation of the truth. There is no authority in Scripture for saying that "it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to create the world." It pleased God to create the world, and in doing so to use the agency of the Son; but that did not make it less the sole work and will of God, for it was done for his good pleasure alone. The Scriptures distinctly ascribe everything in creation to God alone. "God who created all things by Jesus Christ." Eph. iii. 9. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son . . . . by whom also he made the worlds." Heb. i. 2. The Scriptures, therefore, neither ascribe to the Son nor to the Holy Ghost anything but a subordinate place in the Creation of the world. In order, therefore, to bring the clause into harmony with

the Scriptures, it must simply read, "It pleased God to create."

But the rest of the clause is just as far from the truth as the first part. I object to the use of the word "world," because it is here erroneously used to include the heavens and the earth, and all things therein. In the Scriptures, the word "world" only means the material Earth, or the inhabitants of the Earth. For instance: "The world is the Lord's, and they that dwell therein." Ps. xxiv. 1. "Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world." Ps. xlix. 1. "Nor fill the face of the world with cities." Isa. xiv. 21. "I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me." John xvii. 9. "And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2. Besides, the word "world" is not used in the Scripture narrative of the Creation; the Sacred Historian says, "God created the heaven and the Earth."

The clause next asserts, that what it calls the world, with all things visible and invisible, were "made of nothing." This is arrant nonsense, for which there is no warrant in Scripture; and which is contradicted by all we know of Science,—and Science, be it remembered, is Man's discovery of God's works. It must be remembered that the Westminster Divines were utterly ignorant of the Sciences of Natural History and Chemistry, and therefore in their ignorance misunderstood both the plain narration in Genesis, and also the words of Paul. The Apostle of the Gentiles, writing by the direction of the Spirit of God, *and therefore teaching true Science*, said, "Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Heb. xi. 3. This is a scientific truth; but it is a very different truth from that false conclusion ignorant theologians have drawn from it. Every substance in this world may be converted into gases

which are invisible to mortal eyes; but matter when in the state of a gas is as truly matter, as when it composes the hardest substance. People who know nothing of Chemistry have only to fill an air-cushion with invisible air or gas, and when they sit down on it they will become convinced that air or gas is something, though it can neither be felt nor seen. It never can be called nothing, because chemical agents can again restore it to the sight and to the touch. Coal is a very solid substance; yet on being burnt, it is converted into invisible gases. It is only its form which is changed. The whole substance or matter of the solid coal is still in the invisible and intangible gas.

Supposing, therefore, that the Earth was originally formed from condensed gases, it could not be "formed of nothing," as this clause erroneously asserts. The matter was merely in another form, a form invisible to human eyes; so that Paul's statement is both true Scripture, and true Science, when he said that "things which are seen were not made from things which do appear." Paul still further bears out this view, for he says, "The worlds were framed by the word of God." The Greek is very expressive; it is "arranged," which means put in order from pre-existing matter. Heb. xi. 3. The words stating that "the world was made from nothing" must therefore be struck out of the Confession as untrue and unscriptural.

Theologians, however, who always delight to involve themselves in quibbles, especially when in the wrong, lay great stress on the word "create," which they assert means "to make of nothing." I have nothing to do with how the word may *occasionally* be used in the English language; at present we have alone to see in what sense it is used in the Bible, and particularly in this narrative of the creation. In the 27th verse of the first chapter of Genesis it says, "So God created man;" at the 21st verse, "God created

great whales;" and the 1st verse says, "God created the Heaven and the Earth." Whatever the word "created"—"bara" in Hebrew—means in one of these passages, it must mean the same in all. If it can be clearly shown in one instance that it simply and only means, *caused matter already in existence to assume a new form* or take new combinations, then it must have the same meaning in all the other passages.

Now, as the Scriptures are intended to give an account of Man and his moral history, they are very particular in informing us how he was created. Was he made of nothing? No! "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." Gen. ii. 7. The creation of man, therefore, was not a creation from nothing, but a creation from pre-existent matter.

But if we look attentively at the narrative of the creation of all the living creatures, we shall see the same truth told. It was the waters which brought forth fowl, and whales and fish. It was the Earth which brought forth all other living creatures, cattle and beasts of every kind; also all herbs and trees. All were created from pre-existing matter.

It is thus seen that the Hebrew word bara, which our English translation renders "created," when used by the sacred historian, means simply, and only, "causing matter already in existence to assume a new form, or new combinations;" so we are bound to assume that the same word, when speaking of the creation of the earth itself, has the exact same meaning. It is only by its being so interpreted that it could agree with Paul's testimony, and with the exact science of Chemistry. But the fact is, the Hebrew word "bara" does not mean to create something out of nothing; it simply means, as Paul reads it, to frame, or to arrange, in a new order, or combination, something already

existing. Mr Young's new translation fully bears out this view. In so far, then, as the Scriptures are concerned, matter may be as Eternal as God himself, as many philosophers have held. All true science, it may be remarked, as it is but man's intelligent reading of that other Book which God has made known to us, viz., his works, will be found to agree with the words of revelation, provided we interpret that revealed word aright. The Book of Nature, and the Book of revelation, both proceeding from the same all-wise, almighty Being, must and will agree; and if they appear to disagree, the fault will lie with ourselves, as we have either misinterpreted the one Book or the other.

I shall next offer a few remarks on the phrase "in the beginning," as the Westminster Divines evidently confounded many beginnings together.

The first verse of Genesis opens with the words, "In the beginning." This verse, be it remarked, has no connection whatever with the verses which follow. It is properly a grand opening declaration that all things in heaven and Earth were made by God "in the beginning." As God had no beginning, this phrase must mean the beginning of that point of time when it pleased God to create the heaven and the Earth.

It must be apparent to the meanest capacity (though the fact was unknown to the Westminster Divines) that in the Scriptures there are various "Beginnings" spoken of, which are vastly distant from each other. These we shall mention in what we may suppose to be their order, offering a few remarks on each.

First, and of eldest date, we have that "Beginning" of which John the Evangelist speaks: "In the beginning was the Word." This beginning we imagine to be so very Old, that it might almost be regarded as equivalent to "from all Eternity." Still it is not so. It is clearly mentioned in

several passages of Scripture as a distinct point of *Time*,—God alone being from all Eternity. Thus: "He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning." Col. i. 18. "And again, when he (God) bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Heb. i. 6. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Heb. i. 5. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." Col. i. 15. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Rev. iii. 14.

The *Second* "Beginning" of which the Scriptures speak, is undoubtedly that mentioned in the first verse of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the Earth." This second beginning was, we know, after the first "beginning," inasmuch as God employed the agency of the Son in making the worlds. "God created all things by Jesus Christ." Eph. iii. 9. "God who . . . . has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Heb. i. 1. This "beginning" would, therefore, also be myriads of ages before that very recent period of time when man was created; and must be a period of very great antiquity—almost eternity indeed,—seeing that the heavens would be created before any of the heavenly host were called into existence; and yet this verse declares that the Earth was made at the same time as the heavens.

The Third "Beginning" noticed in the Scriptures, is that beginning when the heavenly Host was created, alluded to by John in the words, "The Devil sinneth from the beginning," 1 John iii. 8; and the fact alluded to by Jude, "The angels which kept not their first estate." 6. This "beginning" must also, in the nature of things, be a be-

ginning myriads of ages before the creation of man, else there could be no such thing as Eternity.

The Fourth "beginning" spoken of in the Scriptures, is that very recent point of time when the surface of the earth was arranged as a habitation for man; and the present creatures which live on the Earth, and Man himself, were called into existence. This beginning is only about six thousand years ago, if the Mosaical chronology be correct, and is begun to be described in the second verse of Genesis, and is distinctly spoken of by Jesus, as: "God, which made them at the beginning, made them male and female." Matt. xix. 14.

There are other "beginnings" mentioned in the Scriptures; but these are the only beginnings of importance to notice in the present case.

Now the above clause in the Confession of Faith, and almost all modern theologians, confound these "beginnings" together, and teach the self-evident untruth, that Jesus Christ, with heaven and all its inhabitants, together with the material substance of this our globe, are no older than six thousand years; in fact, were only called into existence a few days before man was created! All such assertions result from ignorance, and from not endeavouring to understand whether more beginnings are spoken of in the Scriptures than one.

The Exposition just given is not only the only possible one, but it strictly agrees with all that Moses and the inspired writers have stated, and with the discoveries of modern Geologists. The Book of Nature, it must be remembered, is just as much the handwriting of God, as the Book of Revelation; and when these two books are read aright, they will always be found to corroborate each other, as both proceed from the same all-wise Being. Now, in so far as our Earth is concerned, the researches of modern

Geologists prove that this Earth must have had an existence millions of ages before man was created;[1] and that it has been subjected to many violent convulsions during that period. As we have just seen, the statement by Moses does not contradict, but fully bears out this view of the case; for he assigns an antiquity to the Earth as great as that of the heavens, and these must have been called into existence myriads of myriads of ages before man was created. Were we, in fact, to accept the erroneous interpretation of the Westminster Divines, and common theologians, we would arrive at the absurd conclusion, that it was only six thousand years since the Son of God was begotten of the Father, —that it was only six thousand years since the Heavens and all the heavenly host were called into existence; and that throughout Eternity, up to that point of time, no worlds filled space, no Heaven had an existence, no anthems of praise rose around the throne of the Almighty!!! It is positive blasphemy to conceive such a thing.

Look what Moses really says, when in the second verse of Genesis he begins to tell us something about the condition of the Earth immediately before it was fitted for man's habitation—immediately before man was created—immediately before that point of Time which I have described as the Fourth Beginning which is mentioned in the Scriptures. It was not *then* created (or arranged, as Paul terms it in Heb. xi. 3) from invisible gas or vapours. On the other hand, it had existed myriads of ages from that be-

[1] Professor Owen, in his recent work "Palæontology," remarks, "Finally, Palæontology has yielded the most important facts to the highest range of knowledge to which the human intellect aspires. It teaches that the globe allotted to man has revolved in its orbit through a period of time so vast, that the mind, in the endeavour to realize it, is strained by an effort like that by which it strives to conceive the space dividing the solar system from the most distant nebulæ."—P. 2.

ginning of its existence when the heavens and the earth were first formed. But at that particular point of time it was a vast material Ball, apparently without life or living creature on its surface, encompassed in darkness, probably from being covered with dense clouds. It also at that time consisted of solid land and of sea, the greater portion of the solid land being probably covered by the sea; for we are told that when the Spirit of God went to survey the scene, "The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters."

For these, and other reasons which might easily have been given, I protest against the statement made in the Confession of Faith, that "the world and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, were created or made of nothing in the space of six days." The whole statement is contrary to Scripture, as we have just seen. I would amend the whole clause thus:

"All things in Heaven and in Earth were created by God; and when he arranged the Earth as a fit habitation for man, he appears to have done it in six periods of time, termed in the sacred narrative, days."

2. "*After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.*"

The first remark I have to offer is, that this clause ought distinctly to have stated that man was created "a male and a female," or one pair only. The translators of our English Bible have quite overlooked the important point of putting in the definite, or the indefinite articles, as the case may be, and from this want, cause the meaning of many passages to be quite obscure. Thus in Gen. i. 27, the true reading is: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, a male and a female created he them." The evidence of Jesus to the same point is strong, though quite lost in our English Version. Thus Matthew relates that Jesus said, "He which made them at the beginning made them a male and a female." xix. 4. Corresponding with this double evidence are the particulars of the creation of Man, as given in the second chapter of Genesis. Modern research thoroughly corroborates the truth of these statements, that all mankind are descended from one pair only; though the American naturalists, to carry out their most unchristian hate of the negro race, have endeavoured to twist facts to show that each race had a distinct origin.

I am not aware that there is any passage in the Scriptures which states that man, when created, was "endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness," as this clause asserts: indeed, it must be clear even to pretty obtuse minds, that had man been so endowed, he never would have fallen. I feel assured the Westminster Divines, in making this statement, allowed themselves to be led by Calvin, and not by the Scriptures,—in this, as in most other cases, not interpreting Scripture by Scripture, but Scripture by Calvin's commentaries. The passage on which they found their statement has no bearing on the case at all. Paul says, "That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. iv. 24. This clearly refers *not* to the state of Man at his creation,

but to the state of man renewed by the influences of the Holy Spirit.

My ideas of Man, when he was first created, are, that he was made a perfect being, possessed of all knowledge necessary for the existence he was to lead, and for his enjoyment, occupation, etc.; that he had the full power of Reason, so as to enable him to choose the good and to reject the bad; that he had probably constant communion with God, and the benefit of his instruction, or that of some of the heavenly host; that he had the most perfect free-will; but that, far from being a child in intellect, as some weak-minded divines imagine, he had every knowledge needful for him, and far beyond what his descendants had. My own conviction is, that to him were revealed the uses of all things on earth: trees for timber and fuel; certain rocks or ores to furnish Iron, copper, silver, tin, and all metals, and the manner in which these metals might be extracted and worked; a knowledge of music; the uses of grains, herbs, fruits, and roots, for food and medicine; a knowledge of the heavenly bodies, etc., etc. In no other way could man so early have acquired a knowledge of all the Arts as we find the very grandchildren of Adam to have attained. The Scriptures do not say that Tubal-Cain was the discoverer of the uses of the metals in which he worked, though many venture to draw that conclusion. On the contrary, the history only shows that by that time it was found convenient that each family should employ its energies on that branch of Art for which it seemed best fitted by natural capacity and taste, and that Tubal-Cain's family chose the working in metals as that in which they were most proficient. And so of all the others.

There is no scriptural authority for the statement, that the image of God, in which man was created, consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. I have already

fully shown, in commenting on the first clause of the second Chapter, that man was made after the external form or likeness of God, and not after any spiritual likeness, so far as the narrative in Genesis shows. It was shown that the same historian who says, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," said also, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him," Gen. v. 1; and then adds, "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth," v. 3. It is the same historian who is using the same words in both narratives; and the likeness cannot mean a *spiritual* likeness in the one case, and a *bodily* likeness in the other. Whatever the words mean in the one passage, they must mean the same in the other; and the last quoted passage clearly proves it was a bodily likeness, and not a spiritual one. But there are other passages which demonstrate it was a bodily likeness, and not a spiritual likeness in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; which likeness Calvin and all his followers assert was lost by the fall. For we find the Scriptures speaking of man's likeness to God after the fall just as before it, which they never would do were Calvin's views those taught in Scripture.

When God gave some laws to Noah after the flood, one was to put to death every murderer; and the reason assigned was, because *the murderer had defaced the image of God.* "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man." This, of course, could not refer to any spiritual likeness, for it could not be destroyed by killing the body; and if that likeness had been lost by the fall, as falsely asserted by Calvin, it would not have been alluded to here, and it could not be destroyed by killing a body which had lost that likeness. But the apostle alludes to the bodily likeness of man

when he says, "A man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God." 1 Cor. xi. 7. This is said of fallen man, and must therefore refer to his bodily configuration alone.

We thus see, then, there is no authority in Scripture for saying, as this clause asserts, that man's likeness to God, when he was created, consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. All these passages, on the other hand, prove that it was a bodily likeness alone.

Theologians have written an immense deal of nonsense about the Command given to Adam. As man, when first created, possessed all things, none of what we call the moral laws, embraced in the Ten Commandments, could apply to him. Therefore, to test his obedience, God gave him the single command to abstain from eating the fruit of a particular tree. This was at once the simplest, yet the highest and most stringent command which could have been given to him to test his obedience and faith. What, in fact, is the main use of all the varied commands now given to us Gentile Christians? Just the very same—to test our obedience and faith. These must be numerous to suit our condition; one served God's purpose with Adam. The tree being continually before his eyes, always tempting him with its luscious fruit, was a constant source of strong temptation—a strong trial of his Faith in God's word. We all know how he fell through the influence of his love for Eve. But in nothing of all this can I discover the slightest trace of his originally possessing righteousness and true holiness. He was righteous and holy so long as he did not sin against God by breaking his laws; but I cannot see that this justifies the statement made in the Confession.

It is quite true that Solomon says in Ecclesiastes vii. 29, "This only have I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." This passage,

however, does not support in the least the statement made in the Confession, because the word "upright," as there used, does not mean righteousness and true holiness, but only a state of freedom from sin.

The last phrase used in the above clause, "and had dominion over the creatures," is erroneously placed, inasmuch as it limits man's dominion over the creatures to that period of time whilst he kept the command of God: "Which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures." This is an entire misconception; for no such limitation, no limitation at all, was put on man's dominion over the creatures. The authority to have dominion was as unlimited as the command to be fruitful and multiply. In fact, it was part of the same command. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth." Gen. i. 28. Nay, it might almost be said that man was made *in order that he might have dominion over the creatures;* for when God proposed to make man, he said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea," etc. Gen. i. 26. How could weak, feeble man, with neither the claws or jaws of the lion, the strength of the elephant, nor the invulnerable hide of the rhinoceros, dare to venture abroad among the savage inhabitants of the forest, unless he had this divine command and promise to give him confidence?

This dominion man did not lose by the Fall; indeed, it was after the fall he alone had need of such a power, when he was driven from the garden of Eden, and had to fight his way in the world. God, however, in his mercy to our fallen race, when man was once more reduced in numbers, after the Flood renewed to Noah this dominion. "And the

dread of you, and the fear of you, be upon every beast of the Earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth upon the Earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea." Gen. ix. 2. The Psalmist also fully bears out this view of the case, and gives not the slightest hint that man only possessed, or was promised, this dominion so long as he remained innocent. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, even the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea." Ps. viii. 6–8.

Man's dominion over the creatures was not therefore limited, as this clause in the Confession would have it, to man's state of innocence in Eden, but extends to man at all periods of time and to all generations; and is as potent now, as in the days when first it was given.

CHAPTER V.

OF PROVIDENCE.

1. "*God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.*"
2. "*Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immu-*

tably and infallibly; *yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.*"

3. "*God in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.*"

I suppose we must agree to these three clauses. I am, however, of opinion, that in all this the Confession is far too minute; for we can know nothing with certainty regarding much of what is here averred; and it is most needless to profess belief in what *may* be true, but of which we cannot be certain.

4. "*The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.*"

As in succession I read over the various clauses of this prolix Confession, I am more and more offended at the very low idea which the authors of that Confession must have had of the God who rules over all. First, they assert he

has some quality or attribute on which the Scriptures are silent; and then they defend him for the exercise of that supposed quality, which defence, instead of increasing our admiration of the Great God, has the very opposite effect.

It is truly dangerous to go beyond the Scriptures, and presume to be able to explain all the reasons of God's workings with men; and this 4th clause is another example of the danger of meddling with that which man does not understand, and cannot in his present imperfect state understand, because it is not explained in the revealed word.

Where, for example, do we find the slightest hint given that the wisdom, power, and goodness of God were manifested in the first fall, and all other sins of angels and of men? To me it seems utter blasphemy to say so. Then what did the Westminster divines mean by saying, that that first Fall, and all other sins of angels and of men, occurred "not by a bare permission"? This necessitates that they were commanded. It is surprising that any man, or any class of men, could be found proclaiming and upholding doctrines so utterly repugnant to the whole teaching of Scripture; and yet the Clergy hold the Confession of Faith in far higher esteem than the Scriptures themselves; so that if a man does not subscribe to all the irrelevant and unscriptural absurdities taught in it, they would cast him out of the Church.

The Scripture teaching is, that God sets man in this world in a state of trial and probation, giving him Reason and conscience to guide him in his path; but, if in a Christian land, giving him, *in addition*, his revealed word to enable him to resist the trials and temptations to which he is exposed. There is therefore neither truth nor sense in this clause of the Confession; for it first states that God orders the sin,—and, of course, if God orders it, man cannot avoid it, and is not guilty if he falls under it,—and then it says

that the sinfulness proceedeth only from the creature, which it could not do had the creature no power to resist the will of God.

The whole of this involved clause ought, therefore, to have simply said, "God allows men to be tempted as a trial of their faith; some he allows to fall, others he enables to conquer."

5. "*The most wise, righteous, and gracious God, doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption, and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.*"

Like all others in the Confession, this clause is overloaded with words which obscure its meaning; indeed, the whole Confession from beginning to end is in this respect as unlike the Scriptures as possible. To bring it to intelligible English it ought to read: "God doth ofttimes allow his people to be tempted through their lusts and passions, that they may discover their true state of feebleness, and feel their constant need of fleeing to God as their sure refuge."

6. "*As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace,*

whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan: whereby it comes to pass, that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others."

The above clause teaches a doctrine quite the opposite of that taught in the 3d Chapter, which treats of God's decrees. If some men are condemned for ever, irrespective of their works, as that third chapter asserts, how can it be true, as is said, in this clause, that they are blinded and hardened for former sins? Both cannot be true. Men should keep to confessing what they understand, and what is plainly revealed in Scripture, without involving themselves in statements which are beyond the power of man's present Reason to understand, which are certainly nowhere clearly stated in Scripture, and on which it is consequently folly to dogmatize.

7. "*As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.*"

So far so true; but just as all creatures are in a world of trial, so is the Church, in whatever sense we take the word "Church." All things may eventually turn out for the good of the Church; but many of the Dispensations of Providence regarding it, like those regarding man indivi-

dually, seem to be far from being so, as the true Church has been, and may be oppressed for ages, persecuted, put down, and brought almost to extinction.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE FALL OF MAN, OF SIN, AND OF THE PUNISHMENT THEREOF.

1. "*Our first parents being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.*"

The first part of this clause I believe to be true, and that it may be proved by the word of God, viz., that "our first Parents being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit." I know of no authority, however, in so far as the Scriptures are concerned, for the remainder of the clause; and unless we have the distinct authority of Scripture, all such statements must be omitted, for they presume to be wise beyond what is written. It is quite true that the Westminster Divines do quote a text from the Scriptures, from which they aver they deduced the above challenged statement; but it is one of the most ludicrous misquotations and misinterpretations which it is possible to conceive The sole passage quoted in support of their statement is, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Rom. xi. 32.

Now if any one will take the trouble to read the context, he will at once convince himself that the passage has no application whatever to Adam, no application even to the human race generally, no application whatever to original sin; but is expressly limited to the Jewish People; and occurs in the course of Paul's explanation of the reasons for the whole Jewish People (both those who rejected and those who accepted the gospel) being eventually saved. Yet such is the manner in which the Scriptures are misapplied by the composers of the Confession of Faith! The whole of the latter part of the clause must therefore be deleted as making a statement which has no support from Scripture.

2. "*By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.*"

As usual, the above clause says too much; and what it does say is not conform to the Scriptures, but is a metaphysical deduction from certain statements in the Scriptures, whose meaning the Westminster Divines misunderstood. This I shall prove in my comments on the next clause. The above clause ought alone to have said: "Our First Parents by their sin fell from their original righteousness, and so became liable to death; and having once sinned, became more liable through their lusts and passions to sin again."

3. "*They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.*"

This is one of the subjects on which, it appears to me, Theologians have constructed the most monstrous superstructure of nonsense, and mystified it with the title of "The Doctrine of Original Sin."

Now, in studying the Scriptures, don't let us mystify the doctrines or facts there taught by calling in the aids of that false philosophy "metaphysics," as if the Scriptures required the aids of any philosophy for the discovery of its truths. Let us always remember Paul's warning, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit." Let us always remember how fearfully the whole truths of Scripture have been obscured by vain philosophy from the Third Century of the Church down to our own day; and that even yet we pay far more regard to metaphysical reasonings than to the teachings of Scripture. Now the whole doctrine of Original Sin may be truly said to rest on metaphysical reasonings founded on a passage whose true meaning has been misunderstood. Let us therefore begin at the very beginning, and understand clearly what we are talking about.

When God created man, he put him in the garden of Eden, and gave him one only command in the following words: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen ii. 16, 17. Adam broke this law: he ate the forbidden fruit, and from that moment he became a mortal being, that is, a being liable to death; and as every creature can only generate its like, all mankind, from being descended from this mortal being, are mortal also; and, by the universal law of nature, must die.

Now any one who is capable of reasoning must perceive that in all this there is no imputation of Sin, neither indeed

can be. We do not die because sin is imputed to us and death is inflicted as a punishment for that imputed sin; but we die because we are the descendants of a mortal creature, and in this respect die by virtue of the same universal law of nature which decrees death to every creature on the face of this earth who is descended from a mortal stock, from the lowest organized plant or zoophyte, to the last and highest of God's creatures—man. They don't die because they have sinned, but because they are the descendants of mortal creatures. And man now dies for the very same reason.

Now Paul's teaching on this subject is quite in harmony with the above remarks; though the Westminster Divines founded their whole doctrine on a passage of his, whose meaning they failed to understand. Paul is reasoning to the effect, that as one man, Adam, brought death into the world by his disobedience or sin, so the other man, Christ Jesus, brought life by his obedience. In explaining this fact Paul uses the following words: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. v. 12. This translation does not, however, give the true meaning; the original Greek text says, "and so death passed upon all men through him in whom all have sinned." It is clearly seen from this statement of Paul's that there is no imputation of sin. Paul is explaining a fact, and giving the reason for all men dying. Adam, by breaking a command of God, sinned; and the punishment for that special sin being death to Adam (that is, reducing him to the condition of a mortal being); so all mankind, descending from him after he had become a mortal creature, must be mortal also, must die. In one sense, therefore, all mankind sinned *in* Adam; but that is no imputation of sin to mankind; and it is not from any imputation of sin that they die, but

because, by a fixed decree of Nature, every creature descended from a mortal creature must die.

That this is Paul's meaning is not left for a moment dubious, if we continue to read the words which Paul writes immediately after those quoted above. "For until the Law sin was in the world; but Sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Rom. v. 13. In this passage, Paul, by the Holy Spirit, declares that though men died from the days of Adam up to that period when God made known the Law to Moses, these men did not die in consequence of any imputation of Sin, because no Sin was imputed unto them, seeing they were under no law. The inference, then, is just as plain as if Paul had written it in so many words, that mankind die because they are the descendants of a mortal creature. The first created of mankind was made immortal, but got a law to keep, and was informed that if he broke that command, his body would no longer remain immortal, but become mortal, liable to death. The moment that Law was broken, his body became mortal; and all his descendants, like their great progenitor, must die.

Paul, therefore, in the above passage teaches the very opposite of the doctrine taught by the Confession. The Confession says that "the guilt of this sin was imputed;" but Paul says the very reverse, for he says that "Sin is not imputed when there is no Law," and in this very passage teaches us that there was no Law till it was revealed to Moses. But Paul repeats himself in Rom. iv. 15: "For where no law is, there is no transgression;" and yet again, "For by the Law is the knowledge of Sin." And John follows up the same argument by telling us why this should be so; for he gives as the de-

finition of Sin, "Sin is the transgression of the Law." 1 John iii. 4.

Now let there be no mistake about what the phrase "the Law" means in all these passages. It was no law given to Adam. This is rendered as clear as possible by the quotation from Paul's writings given above; which also fixes it as the Law given or revealed to Moses. It is this Law which is alone referred to in the New Testament as "the Law"—a law given not to the human race, nor intended for all mankind, but for a small nation, chosen from the other nations of the Earth, and limited to them alone. Paul authoritatively settles this fact, though it was unknown to the Westminster Divines; for he says, "For whatsoever things the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law." Rom. iii. 19. "For by the Law is the knowledge of Sin." Rom. iii. 20. "Where no Law is, there is no transgression." Rom. iv. 15. "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law, . . . that I might gain them that are without Law." 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21. "For the Law was given by Moses." John i. 17. "The Gentiles, which have not the Law." Rom. ii. 14. These passages clearly teach that the Gentiles had not the Law; and the word "Gentiles," in the New Testament, means the whole nations of the Earth excepting the Jews. They also clearly teach that the Law was given to Moses, and was limited in its application to those alone who were under its dominion. How these plain truths have failed to be recognised, I cannot pretend to explain.

But the subject may be viewed from another point. If what is called "original sin" remained as a sin with every one who inherited a mortal human body, and if it caused

every descendant of Adam to be a sinful corrupted creature, "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body," as this Confession teaches; then Jesus, who took on him our nature, and assumed a fleshly body, must with it have inherited all the sinful qualities, and all the guilt attachable to a mortal body. He must, therefore, like his brethren in the flesh, have been, to use the Confession's own words, "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body." There is no getting over this conclusion if we adopt the unscriptural doctrines of the Confession as to what they style "original Sin." The Scriptures assure us, that when Jesus appeared as a man, he took on him our whole nature, whether that were good or bad; entered the world, like every other human being, as a babe born of a woman; and therefore must have inherited any imputed guilt, if any guilt was imputed to the descendants of Adam. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham: wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." Heb. ii. 16, 17. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Matt. viii. 17. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John i. 14. "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Rom. i. 3. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Rom. viii. 3. "For we are members of his flesh, of his body, and of his bones." Eph. v. 30.

But the Scriptures never represent Jesus in the character which they would have done, had his assuming a human body brought him under all those curses which the Confession avers result from the imputation of original sin. The Scriptures teach the very reverse; and all which they do teach is in perfect harmony with the explanation I have given as to the nature of the Fall of Adam, and which I

have shown is Paul's distinct teaching. Thus they say of Jesus, he "knew no sin." 2 Cor. v. 21. "Was tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. iv. 15. "Did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Pet. ii. 22. "In him is no Sin." 1 John iii. 5. "Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Heb. vii. 26.

To get rid of these unanswerable facts, the holders of the doctrine of original sin, in order to show that Jesus did not inherit this original sin at his birth, are obliged to make the statement, that "Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin." This assertion, strange to say, is not met with in the Scriptures. It is only said, "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. iv. 15. And all the other allusions and statements made in the New Testament to his sinless nature have the same meaning, and never connect his freedom from sin with his birth. Yet the statement is true. Christ was born of Mary without sin. *But so is every child which is born of Parents who have been lawfully married.* It is folly to imagine that the mode of conception made any exception in the case of Christ. Paul settles all such false theology by telling us, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." Heb. xiii. 4. "If thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned." 1 Cor. vii. 28. It is truly folly to conceive that following an Institution of God could bring sin with it. Every one, therefore, who is born of a woman—Christ, as well as every child—brought into the world with their fleshly body all the good or bad which proceeds from possessing a body of flesh. They are pure, and have no sin imputed to them till they commit actual transgressions. This is the sole doctrine taught in the New Testament.

Just for a moment let us look at this subject in a common sense aspect. Is it the Law of God that children, for

untold generations, are to be punished for the sins of their parents? It is not. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the Father." Ezek. xviii. 20. Is it consistent with the known goodness of God that a sin committed by Adam in the garden of Eden would be mercilessly imputed to all his descendants, and punished in them as a sin to the end of time? It is not. But you may say, "It is so punished, because we die." But you don't die because of any imputation of sin; you are not *punished* for any sin by being made a mortal creature. You receive that mortal nature by natural inheritance; the same as the creatures around you who never could sin, and yet die; and no one will be so insane as to assert that they die because sin is imputed to them. If Adam's sin were imputed as a sin to any one of his descendants, then the sin of every parent would be imputed in like manner to his descendants; so that the last races of mankind would have an amount of sin on their shoulders which nothing could wipe off. But there is no imputation of sin; the very idea is unscriptural; and it is only from men leaving the plain teaching of the Scriptures, and losing themselves in the mazes of metaphysics, that they have arrived at such a false conclusion.

The phrase used in this clause of the Confession, "death in sin and corrupted nature," is misapplied. The Westminster divines, and old reformers, luxuriated in conning over such terms as "corrupted nature of man," "original corruption of our whole nature," "dead in trespasses and sins," etc., and, without exception, applied them to all mankind, and of every age, whether they had sinned or not. Any one, however, who attentively reads the Scriptures, will perceive that all such phrases are strictly applicable, and are alone applied, to men who have lived so long in the world that they have committed many actual transgressions,

and are living without God in the world, and in disregard of his laws. Did such phrases apply even to children, who, being yet ignorant of any law of God, cannot break that law, Jesus would never have said of these innocent babes, "Of such is the kingdom of God," Mark x. 14; nor would Paul have said, "Now are they holy," 1 Cor. vii. 14. The third clause ought therefore to be struck out of the Confession, and the following substituted: "As Adam by his sin became a mortal creature, all his descendants of the human race, partaking of his nature, are necessarily creatures liable to death, and prone to sin."

4. "*From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.*"

This clause is not required if we remodel the second and third clauses, as proposed; so that no remarks are required regarding it.

5. "*This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated: and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.*"

I again object to these phrases, "original corruption," "corruption of nature." It is quite true that of men who had fallen far into sin, and had become thoroughly debased and corrupted, it is said in Scripture that "they had corrupted themselves," "men of corrupt minds," "put off the

old man which is corrupt," and such like phrases. But I think it has already been satisfactorily shown that all such phrases apply not to man as he is born into the world, but only to him who has lived so long in it that he has committed many actual sins by breaking God's laws. The Apostle Peter fully bears me out in this view of the case when he says of the Christian, "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Peter i. 4. Peter there connects the corruption with the lust, thus thoroughly corroborating Paul's doctrine, "Where no law is, there is no transgression." Rom. iv. 15. And, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." Rom. v. 13. Thus the more narrowly this subject is looked into, the more apparent does it become, that the explanation which I have given of it is the only one consonant with Scripture. The above clause of the Confession may therefore, with the utmost propriety, be omitted.

6. "*Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.*"

To bring the above clause into harmony with the Scriptures, it must be considerably modified. The statement that "original sin brings guilt on the sinner" is not true, because not conformable to the Scriptures. It has already been shown that the sole punishment for the original sin of Adam was death temporal. Because we are descended from him, we die, not as a punishment for a sin imputed

to us, but by virtue of the common law of Nature, that every mortal being can only generate a being mortal like itself. It is just as great folly to suppose that a sin committed by our first Parent Adam would be imputed to us as a sin, as it would be to suppose that all our forefathers' sins were also to be imputed to us. God is a just God; and he would never make one law for Adam's sins, and another law for the sins of Adam's sons. That is to say, if it were the Law of God that the sins of Adam were to be imputed to his descendants, then it would also be the Law that the sins of every father would be imputed to all his descendants throughout all generations. We have only to look on the subject in this light to see its utter folly. It is quite true that had Adam resisted the temptation to which he was exposed, we all should have inherited his immortal nature; so that, *in one sense*, we are punished for his sin. But to suppose that this was any imputation of sin to us, is truly the height of folly; for we die through no imputation of sin, but from being born mortal beings. This I have clearly shown and proved in the case of Jesus Christ; for had sin been imputed to every descendant of Adam, then Jesus must have had sin imputed, and Adam's original sin would have brought guilt on him. The Confession, therefore, teaches what is false doctrine.

But this clause errs on another point, and this from not understanding the Scriptures. It says that the sinner—by which it means every man—"is bound over to the curse of the Law." This assertion results from the confused notion which the Westminster divines had of the Christian religion. They continually mixed up its requirements with those of the Jewish Dispensation, utterly forgetful of the fact, that the whole Mosaical Law was intended solely for that one small nation, the children of Israel; that it was only introduced into the world in the days of Moses; and that it was

for ever abolished by Jesus Christ's death bringing in a New Dispensation, a New Covenant, which was fitted, and intended for the whole nations of the world. Even in the above quoted passages from the writings of Paul, we have this fact distinctly stated in so far as applicable to the subject now under discussion. Paul says, that until the Law was revealed to Moses, sin was in the world, but was not imputed to any one. Rom. v. 13. It is therefore clear as words can make it, that the whole world of men, from the days of Adam up to those of Moses, were not, and could not be "bound over to the curse of the Law," as this clause of the Confession hath it, because the Law did not then exist. More than that, it is equally clear that even after the Law was given to the Children of Israel, it only bound them, and not the rest of mankind; because it was not revealed to the rest of mankind, and they could not break a law of which they were ignorant. Paul also confirms this common sense conclusion, for he avers that "whatsoever things the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law." Rom. iii. 19. "For by the Law is the knowledge of sin." iii. 20. And, "where no law is, there is no transgression." Rom. iv. 15. "The Gentiles, which have not the Law." Rom. ii. 14. "To them that are without Law (I became) as without Law." 1 Cor. ix. 21.

Then, in so far as the Christian is concerned, we know he is not subject to any one of the requirements of the Law; for Jesus Christ by his death abolished the Law. "Now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were bound." Rom. vii. 6. "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. As the Gentiles (that is, all the nations of the world excepting the Jews) never were subject to the Law, and that Law was dead, and was abolished before they were admitted to the Church

of God, it follows as a natural and truly logical deduction, thoroughly borne out by the Scriptures, that the nations of the world cannot be now subject to that which is not in force, and never at any period of the world was applicable to them.

No one, therefore, should allow himself to be deceived by such misrepresentations as those contained in the above clause of the Confession. As we are Gentiles, no command of the Jewish Law is binding on us unless it be repeated and renewed to us by Christ, in which case it will be found in the New Testament. Then it comes to us not as part of "the Law," but as a new Commandment of Christ.

CHAPTER VII.

OF GOD'S COVENANTS WITH MAN.

1. "*The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.*"
2. "*The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.*"

In interpreting the Scriptures, we are very apt to commit serious blunders from misunderstanding the meaning of the

words used. The word "Covenant" is of this nature; and from misunderstanding its meaning, the Westminster Divines have committed the grossest blunders in their statements in the above clause.

In the Scriptures the word "Covenant" has two distinct meanings. *First*, It simply means, as in our language, "a contract, stipulation, or agreement between different parties." Of this nature was Abraham's covenant with Abimelech; Laban's covenant with Jacob; David's covenant with Jonathan. *Secondly*, The word "Covenant" is used instead of, or rather as synonymous with, the word "Testament," or "Mortuary deed,"—a deed which only comes into operation on the death of the Testator; and it is only when the word is used with the meaning of "a Testament" that it has the slightest interest for us Christians, in so far as the Covenants made with man are concerned.

But the fact is, that the translation of the Greek word διαθήκη by the English word "covenant" is a complete mistranslation; that Greek word ought invariably to be translated by the English word "Testament." The basis of the Greek word is θήκη, a tomb or sepulchre; and, of course, the very essence of the Greek word is "a mortuary deed, or Testament," which only comes into operation on the death and burial of the Testator—literally, "through the tomb." In reading our English version one would imagine that two several Greek words were used; for in Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews we find sometimes the word "Covenant," and sometimes the word "testament." Who could believe that it is the same Greek word which is thus differently translated! In every case, therefore, in the New Testament, where the word "Covenant" is met with, it must be altered to the word "Testament."

In the Old Testament, again, the Hebrew word translated "Covenant" in our English Bibles, has the exact

same original meaning as the Greek word, and ought in every case to have been translated "Testament." But the same word came to be used to express a common agreement, as well as a Testament; and as the Old Testament gives us no hint when it uses the word with the one meaning, and when in the other, we are forced to turn to the New Testament for an explanation, if such is there to be found.

This course is absolutely necessary, because the Old Testament speaks of a great many covenants, and without the guidance of the New Testament writings we might easily mistake the Testament of which we are in search. Thus: the very first notice in the Old Testament of any Covenant with man, is that one which God made with Noah, that he would save him and his family, while he drowned the world. "But with thee will I establish my Covenant, and thou shalt come into the ark." Gen. vi. 18.

The second notice of a Covenant in the Old Testament is that one which God made with Noah, and all the living creatures on the earth, after he brought them out of the ark. That Covenant was to the effect that he would not again destroy every living creature on the Earth with a flood of waters; and he appointed the Rainbow as the token of that Covenant with all flesh: "And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting Covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the Earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the Covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the Earth." Gen. ix. 16, 17.

The third Covenant we find mentioned is the Covenant with Abraham, when he was residing at Mamre; when, for a confirmation of the Covenant with God, he was directed to sacrifice various animals, whose bodies were miraculously consumed by fire from God. Gen. xv. 9–18. This Cove-

nant was renewed with Abraham after the birth of Isaac, as a covenant for all his descendants. "And I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Gen. xvii. 7.

It was this Abrahamic Covenant which was solemnly renewed with Moses and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai; and it was renewed, as it had been originally instituted, with the shedding of the blood of beasts in sacrifice. "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you." Exod. xxiv. 8.

Now, to understand which of all these Covenants is the one which is specially termed "the First Covenant," and which Paul in his Epistles contrasts with the Second, or New Covenant, we must refer to Paul's writings.

It must be remembered that it is to Paul's writings alone that we are indebted for the knowledge that there is a first, and a second Covenant or Testament; and had it not been for Paul's writings, we should never have known which of the three Covenants noticed above is that which Paul calls "the first Covenant," or rather "the first Testament." Paul, however, gives us a distinct definition whereby we may know at once a simple agreement from a Testament, for he assures us that all the Covenants of which he speaks are truly "Testaments," or "mortuary deeds;" and in the original Greek he never styles them "covenants" at all, but always, and only, "Testaments." His definition is, therefore, very specific. "Where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator;" or, if the Testator be God, the shedding of the blood of animals, as a vicarious death for that of the Testator.

Paul therefore tells us, that when God made his First Covenant (or Testament) with man, as he could not bring

it into operation, or sanctify it, with his own blood, he directed that the blood of animals should be shed instead. "For where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator. . . . . Whereupon neither the First Testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had given every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined unto you." Heb. ix. 16–20.

All Paul's writings prove this to have been the "First Covenant," or rather "the First Testament," with man, which is of interest to us Christians. Thus Paul says: "If the First Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the Second. For, finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the Land of Egypt." Heb. viii. 7–10. "Then verily the First Covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary; for there was a Tabernacle made, wherein was the candlestick," etc. Heb. ix. 1. (In all the above quotations the word "Testament" ought to be substituted for the word "Covenant," as it is the proper translation of the Greek word.)

From all this, it is apparent that the Confession teaches error, and not truth, in saying that the First Covenant was made with Adam. Paul, by the Holy Spirit, says the First Covenant was made with Moses and the children of Israel; and his testimony, being the only authentic testimony we have in the New Testament on this point, is much more worthy of belief than the totally unscriptural and irrational

teaching of the Westminster Divines. Yet it is this unscriptural teaching which is dignified with the name of "orthodoxy," and all who teach opposite doctrines are branded as teachers of "heresy." Let no one be carried away with a name. Orthodoxy only means having a belief conformable to the creed of the particular Church or Religious Denomination to which we belong. It has no reference whatever to Scripture truths; but may be, and often is, quite opposed to them. Besides, what is considered Orthodox faith by one sect of professing Christians, is branded as heresy by another. As it is Scripture Truth alone of which I am in search, it matters nothing to me whether I am considered by my fellow-men as being orthodox or heterodox. It is my most earnest desire to ascertain what the Scriptures really teach; not what metaphysicians, and metaphysico-theologians, aver that they teach; and whatever I can make out to be distinctly taught in the revealed Will of God is my faith, whether it be considered orthodox or heterodox. I am a disciple of Paul; and I thoroughly believe that his exposition of the Christian Religion is the only true one. In his masterly defence before Felix, he admitted he did not follow the orthodox faith of the Jews, boldly saying, "This I confess, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers," Acts xxiv. 14; and the disciple would be unworthy of the name, were he not equally ready to make the same confession with reference to the unscriptural, Calvinistic orthodox faith of his day.

But I am not done with this clause of the Confession. We have seen, that when we refer to the Old Testament, we find no notice whatever of any covenant, or Testament, being made with Adam. The very first notice of any covenant or agreement is that made with Noah, to save his family from the flood. But the First Testament, or mor-

tuary deed, was made with Abraham and renewed with Moses; and both Old and New Testament are at one on this point.

The command given to Adam was, on the other hand, a simple but stern command to try his faith, and test his self-control. It neither had the element of a common agreement or covenant; nor had it the element of a Testament. It promised nothing for keeping the command, but it denounced death if it should be disobeyed; and it was neither confirmed nor sanctified with the shedding of blood. Notwithstanding of all this, the above clause of the Confession avers that God made a covenant of works with Adam, "wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience." Let us turn then to the only record extant of what really occurred, and see whether it throws any light on the subject: "And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 16, 17. The Hebrew, literally translated, is, "dying thou shalt die," which is the Hebrew idiom for "thou shalt become a mortal being and shalt die." Our translation gives a false rendering, as it assumes that Adam was to die the very day he ate the fruit.

In all this there is no mention of any agreement, or covenant; neither is there any promise of Life. Even logicians, acute as they are at deducing absurdities, have no proposition here on which they could lay hold to deduce that any promise of life was given to Adam, or to any of his descendants,—nay, his descendants are not even alluded to. Adam, when he came from his Maker's hand, when he had the life-giving breath of God breathed into his nostrils, was a perfect creature, fitted to live for ever—was,

in fact, an immortal creature. This perfect creature, however, was placed for wise purposes in a world of trial and probation; and the only command which could have been given him to test his faith in God's word, and his obedience, was that simple one to abstain from eating the fruit of one of the Trees which grew in the midst of the garden. Simple as this test was, it was the highest, the strictest, the best test of his faith, obedience, and self-control which could have been given. If he believed God's word, and showed his faith in that word by exhibiting self-control over his passions, he might have lived for ever; but, tempted by the woman, and she by Satan, man lost his faith in God's word; ceased to exercise self-control; disobeyed God; broke his commandment; and so brought upon himself the change from an immortal to a mortal creature. In nothing of all this was there any promise of life to Adam, or to his posterity,—nay, his descendants are not even alluded to.

We, therefore, now die, not because Adam sinned, and we are punished for his sin; but we die by virtue of the natural law of God, which he has impressed on all his creatures, that every creature, from the highest to the lowest, can only generate its like; so that, if we are sprung from a mortal creature, we also will be mortal—we also, in due season, will die.

Now this First Covenant, or Testament, was neither made with Adam, *nor was it made for all men.* We have shown conclusively by the evidence of the Apostle Paul that the First Covenant was made with Moses and the Children of Israel. It was a Covenant not for the human race, but an exclusive Covenant for one small people,—and was strictly limited to the Descendants of Israel. Let there be no mistake about this. There can be none if we follow Paul, and trace that First Covenant in the Old

Testament writings. "And I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. . . . And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the Covenant betwixt me and you." Gen. xvii. 7, 11. "The Lord our God made a Covenant with us in Horeb, . . . saying. (Then follow the Ten Commandments.) These words the Lord spake unto all your Assembly in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire, and of the cloud, and thick darkness, with a great voice. And he added no more. And he wrote them in two Tables of Stone, and delivered them unto me." Deut. v. 2—22. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a Covenant with thee and with Israel. . . . And he wrote upon the Tables the words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments." Exod. xxxiv. 27, 28. "Which Covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an Everlasting Covenant." Ps. cv. 9, 10. "If that First Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For, finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the Land of Egypt." Heb. viii. 7, 8. "In that he saith, A new Covenant, he hath made the first Old." Heb. viii. 13. "Then verily the First Covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a Tabernacle made," etc. Heb. ix. 1. "For where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator. . . . Whereupon neither the

first Testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined unto you." Heb. ix. 16–20. "These are the two Covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage." Gal. iv. 24.

We thus see that this First Covenant, or Testament, was made in all its solemnity with Moses and the Children of Israel at Mount Sinai, yet was virtually but the renewal of the Covenant made with Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Look at the significant words to Abraham as to the vicarious shedding of blood constituting that Covenant a Testament. "Take me an heifer," etc. Gen. xv. 9. That is to say, "Take for me (God) an heifer." And the object of the Covenant was the same in both instances, viz., "I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Gen. xvii. 7.

But this First Covenant made with Moses is more commonly named in the New Testament "The Law." Let us see, then, whether "the Law" was given to Adam or to Moses, if such information is given. John settles authoritatively the question as to whom the Law was revealed, for he says, "For the Law was given by Moses." John i. 17. And Jesus himself says to the Jews, "Did not Moses give you the Law?" John vii. 19. The Jews said to Jesus, "Now Moses in the Law commanded us." John viii. 5. And this fact was so universally recognised, that "The Law" was commonly called "The Law of Moses." Thus: "If a man on the Sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the Law of Moses should not be broken." John vii. 23. "And to command them to keep the Law of Moses." Acts xv. 5.

"Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, *and confirmed the same to Jacob for a Law*, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant." Ps. cv. 10.

It is thus made as clear as words can make it, that the First Covenant, the only first Covenant alluded to in the New Testament, was made, not with Adam, but with Abraham, and was renewed with Moses and the children of Israel in all its solemnity.

These passages, already quoted, make it equally apparent that that First Covenant, or "The Law," was only made for and with that small people to whom it was given. It was, as the Scriptures repeatedly declare, a covenant, and law, made with Abraham for his descendants alone; as God said, it was a "covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations." Gen. xvii. 7. And "was confirmed to Jacob for a Law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant." Ps. cv. 10. It never was for mankind. Paul bears testimony to this same fact when, in styling it "The Law," he informs us that it was alone binding on those who were under its administration:— "Whatsoever the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law." Rom. iii. 19. He therefore takes it for granted that there are persons who are not under its dominion, by saying: "To them that are without Law (I became) as without Law." 1 Cor. ix. 21. And then he tells us explicitly that all the nations of the world are not under the Law, by saying: "The Gentiles, which have not the Law." Rom. ii. 14.

Such being the truths of Scripture, the whole of the second clause of this chapter of the Confession must be deleted, and the following substituted: "The First Covenant or Testament, vulgarly known as the Covenant of Works, was made originally with Abraham, but was renewed in all its solemnity with Moses and the Children

of Israel. That Covenant, and the Code of Laws given therewith, was strictly limited to the Jews alone, and did not extend to any of the other nations of the world."

3. "*Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace: whereby he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.*"

As it has already been shown that mankind in general had no interest in the First Covenant, because it was limited to the Jew alone, and the rest of mankind were excluded, this clause must also be altered to bring it into harmony with the Scriptures.

The grand and glorious distinction between the First and the Second Covenant was this, that whereas the First was limited to the Jew alone, the Second or New Testament was intended for every man, for every people, nation, and tongue on the face of the Earth. The Jew was no longer to remain the sole depositor or keeper of God's revealed word. He was no longer to be alone dignified with the title of God's chosen or Elect people. The door was to be opened to the Gentiles,—that is, to all the Nations of the World. It is quite surprising that the Westminster Divines did not see this; but they were so led away by the peculiar Theology which they had adopted, that neither they nor their Calvinistic successors can see facts with their own eyes, as they are written in the Scriptures; but alone look at them through the dim metaphysical glass of Calvin.

Now let us examine what this clause avers, and see whether it has the slightest support from Scripture. It says, that as "Man by his Fall made himself incapable of Life by that First Covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace." Were this a true statement, we should find, either in the Old or in the New Testament, some passages which would inform us that that first Covenant was brought to a conclusion by the Fall of Adam, and that in consequence of his fall it died, or was abolished, as it had proved itself insufficient for the purposes for which it was made. In that case we should find it also narrated how a second and more perfect Covenant was, immediately after the Fall, made with Adam for all mankind; for if the statements in the Confession relative to these two Covenants were true, then it follows as a necessity that both Covenants must have been made with Adam,—the *first*, on his creation, while still in Eden; the *second*, immediately after his fall and expulsion from the Garden. This must be apparent to every one. If Adam's sin and Fall made man incapable of attaining life by the First Covenant (which the Confession avers was made with Adam), then God would, immediately on his Fall and expulsion from Eden, have made the Second Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, with him. God certainly never would have waited for more than four thousand years before he made a second Covenant, if the first Covenant had failed to effect its ends almost the very day it was made.

Now let me seriously ask the question, whether any one of these propositions of the Confession can be proved by the Scriptures? And yet the whole must be proved, if the statements in the Confession are true. But the fact is, not one can be proved; they are all false. There is no statement in the Scriptures that either First or Second Covenants were

made with Adam. There is no statement in the Scriptures that the Fall of Adam violated the First Covenant, or brought it to a conclusion, or that it died in consequence of his sin. There is no statement in the Scriptures which shows that either Adam or any man was under the Second Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, *till after the death of Jesus.*

Such being the case, the whole statements in the first portion of the third clause of this chapter of the Confession are false; and as the truths of Scripture on that subject have been perverted, or not been recognised up to this very day, I may be excused from discussing them at greater length than might otherwise seem to be necessary, and also from repeating much of what I have already previously written, in order that the whole arguments may read in sequence.

I shall therefore proceed to prove, 1st, That the First Covenant, or Covenant of Works, was made with Moses and the Children of Israel, and was not made with Adam; neither was it made for the human race, but for the Jews alone. 2d, That this First Covenant was brought to an end, and was abolished, not by the Fall of Adam, but by the death of Jesus. And 3d, That the Second Covenant, known as the New Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, was only brought into operation by the death of Jesus, the Testator of the New Covenant; and of course only existed in the world from the date of his death.

1st. *The First Covenant, or Covenant of Works, was made with Moses and the Children of Israel, and was not made with Adam; neither was it made for the human race, but for the Jews alone.* In the immediately preceding pages it has been fully shown that we are indebted to Paul for the knowledge that there is either a First or a Second Covenant; and he pointedly declares that the First Covenant was not made with Adam, but with Moses. In fact, the word "Covenant"

is in no part of the Scriptures applied to any command given to Adam; and the narrative which relates God's doings with Adam, tells us only of a blessing pronounced on the Pair when they were created, and of a stern command to Adam, which was given in these words: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17.

This, then, was no Covenant, but simply a stern command to test his obedience and self-control. Paul tells us that the essential feature of a Covenant is that it is a Testament, which of necessity infers the death of the Testator before it can come into operation; or, if with God, the vicarious shedding of the blood of animals. "For where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator. For a Testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the Testator liveth." Heb. ix. 17. This single fact, then, proves that the first Covenant or Testament (for the words are synonymous) could not have been made with Adam, because there is no mention that the Command was a Covenant; neither had it the nature of a Testament, seeing it was not confirmed by the vicarious shedding of the blood of any animal.

We must, therefore, search elsewhere for the First Covenant or Testament; and Paul gives us all the information we require in the verses immediately succeeding the passage just quoted from Hebrews; for he says: "Whereupon neither the First Testament was dedicated without blood; for when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the Law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the

Testament which God hath enjoined unto you." Heb. ix. 18–20.

All Paul's writings, and the whole writings of the New Testament, prove this to be the only First Covenant which is of the slightest interest to us Christians. It is the only Covenant which is mentioned as a Covenant of works; it is also just as often spoken of as "The Law;" and is the only Covenant, and Law, which is contrasted with the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. "If the First Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the Second. For, finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the Land of Egypt." Heb. viii. 7–10. "Then verily the First Covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly Sanctuary; for there was a Tabernacle made, wherein was the candlestick," etc. Heb. ix. 1.

These passages, then, fix the First Covenant as the one made with Moses and the Children of Israel; and are utterly opposed to the idea of any Covenant whatever having been made with Adam. This is rendered still more certain if we take the trouble to trace that First Covenant to its very beginning. Nor is this difficult; because the Scriptures lead us to it infallibly. "To remember his holy Covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham." Luke i. 72. "The Covenant which God made with our Fathers, saying unto Abraham." Acts iii. 25. "Which Covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same to Jacob for a Law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant." Ps. cv. 9, 10.

These passages, then, are quite distinct in their teaching, and trace the origin of the First Covenant to Abraham, and so limit that First Covenant to the Children of Israel alone of all nations on the face of the Earth. This fact, however, is brought out more strongly by seeing what is written regarding that Covenant in the Old Testament.

"And the Lord God said unto Abram, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon, etc. . . . . In that same day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram." Gen. xv. 9–18. "And I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. . . . . And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; it shall be a token of the Covenant betwixt me and you." Gen. xvii. 7–11. "The Lord made a Covenant with us in Horeb, ... saying, I am the Lord thy God," etc. (here follow the Ten Commandments). These words the Lord spake unto all your Assembly in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them on two Tables of stone, and delivered them unto me." Deut. v. 2–22. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a Covenant with thee and with Israel. . . . . And he wrote upon the Tables the words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments." Exod. xxxiv. 27, 28. "And Moses took the book of the Covenant, and read in the audience of the people. . . . . And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." Exod. xxiv. 7, 8.

We thus see that the Covenant first made with Abra-

ham, and confirmed with the shedding of blood, was the very same Covenant which was renewed in all its solemnity with Moses and the children of Israel. We see that that Covenant was limited to the descendants of Abraham, and was made for them alone, and not for all mankind. Nay more, that Covenant did not even include all Abraham's children, but left out his six sons by his legal wife Keturah, and his son by his concubine Hagar. The first head of this argument is, therefore, fully proved.

2d. *This First Covenant was brought to an end, and was abolished, not by the Fall of Adam, but by the death of Jesus.* If the first head of this argument is proved, there can be no need for enlarging on this one. It is quite impossible that the Sin and Fall of Adam could have brought the First Covenant, the Covenant of works, to an end, if that Covenant was not brought into the world till nearly three thousand years after Adam died. Whatever effect, therefore, Adam's sin had, it could have no effect whatever on the First Covenant, which was not made known till nearly three thousand years after his death, and then only to Abraham and to his descendants in a certain line, and to nobody else. This branch of the inquiry, therefore, is limited to the latter clause of the above proposition, viz., that the First Covenant was abolished by the death of Jesus.

We have seen from the passages just quoted from Exodus and Deuteronomy, that the First Covenant was embodied in the words of the Ten Commandments; that, in fact, the words of the Ten Commandments were the articles of that Covenant. This fact has been quite overlooked; and I therefore direct special attention to it, as it will require to be particularly noticed and commented on when speaking of the Sabbath. "He wrote on the Tables the words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments." Exod. xxxiv. 28. Now it is this Covenant which Paul teaches us was abolished,

and done away, by the death of Jesus. But Paul in his masterly writings applies various epithets to that Covenant besides its more common title "The Law." Thus:

"In that he saith, A New Covenant, he hath made the First old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Heb. viii. 13. "He taketh away the first that he may establish the Second." Heb. x. 9. "If the Ministration of Death written and engraven in Stones was glorious . . . . which ministration was to be done away. . . . . For if the Ministration of Condemnation be glory. . . . . For if that which is done away was glorious. . . . . The Children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." 2 Cor. iii. 7–13. "These are the two Covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage." Gal. iv. 24. "Be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage." Gal. v. 1. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the Law of Commandments contained in ordinances." Eph. ii. 15. "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. "But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held." Rom. vii. 6. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ." Rom. vii. 4.

These passages, then, distinctly prove that the First Covenant, the Ten Commandments, and with them of course the whole Mosaical Laws, were abolished, and done away, and were made as if they had never been, by the death of Jesus. That whole Covenant, therefore, and everything connected therewith, is to us Christians, and to all mankind, declared by the Scriptures to be so abolished and done away as if it had never been. No part of it therefore can apply to us, or to any member of the human race. We Gentiles were not called to the knowledge of God, or of any of his laws, till Christ by his death abolished that first

Covenant of Works, these Ten Commandments; and, with them, the whole Mosaical Law.

3d. *The Second Covenant, known as the New Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, was only brought into operation by the Death of Jesus, the Testator of the New Covenant; and, of course, only existed in the world from the date of his death.* One passage need alone be quoted to prove this so very apparent truth; yet a truth which was apparently hidden from the Westminster Divines, who, in the 5th clause of this very Chapter, aver that "the Covenant of Grace was administered in the time of the Law." Paul, however, settles all such false teachings by addressing our reason in his masterly Epistles, for he says: "Where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator; for a Testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the Testator liveth. . . . . For this cause he is the Mediator of the New Covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the First Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance." Heb. ix. 16, 17, and 15. "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. ix. 26. "He taketh away the First, that he may establish the Second; by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all." Heb. x. 10. "Grace and truth came by Christ Jesus." John i. 17.

Now the first quoted of these passages proves beyond the possibility of dispute, that the New Covenant brought in by the death of Jesus could not exist in the world till his death brought it into operation; for Paul assures us on this very point, that a Covenant or Testament is of no strength at all while the Testator liveth. "For this cause," saith Paul, "he is the Mediator of the New Testament." Heb. ix. 15. And

again, "Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament." Heb. xii. 24. Jesus also, speaking of his own death at the last Supper, said, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood." Luke xxii. 20.

I have, therefore, shortly, but convincingly, proved that the First Covenant was not made with Adam, but with Abraham and Moses; that it was not for the human race, but for the children of Israel; that it was not brought to an end by Adam's Fall, but by the death of Jesus; and that the New Covenant, or Testament, did not come into operation till the death of Jesus, the Testator, or Mediator, of the New Covenant.

The third clause, therefore, of this Chapter of the Confession, in order to bring it into harmony with the Scriptures, must read thus: "In order to bring all nations to the Knowledge of God, God in due time was pleased to abolish the First Covenant or Testament, and to make a New Covenant or New Testament, commonly called the Covenant of Grace, through the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; whereby life, salvation, and the remission of sins, were freely offered to all the inhabitants of the world, requiring of them Faith in Jesus Christ as the sole mediator between God and men, and promising his Holy Spirit, to make them able and willing to believe."

4. "*This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.*"

This clause clearly proves that the Westminster Divines were in perfect ignorance of the facts which I have stated

in my comments on the first clauses of this chapter, viz., that the word which the English Translators rendered "Covenant" ought to have been invariably translated "Testament." It is the same Greek word which in the 8th chapter of Hebrews is translated "Covenant," which is afterwards translated "Testament" from the middle of the 9th chapter. There was no occasion, therefore, for this clause; for it is of "Testaments" alone of which Paul writes; and in the New Testament, the word Covenant should be blotted out, and the word "Testament" in every case substituted for it. The only place where the English translators could make no possible mistake, they put in the proper word. Thus: "Where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator. For a Testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the Testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first Testament was dedicated without blood; for when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined unto you." Heb. ix. 16–20.

It is a mistake, then, to speak of Covenants at all. That word ought to be limited to the cases where they were simple contracts or agreements between different parties, as between God and Noah, or between Abraham and Abimelech, or between David and Jonathan. But the Abrahamic and the Mosaical Covenants ought invariably to be designated "the Abrahamic and the Mosaical Testaments." The Greek word is properly translated in the above quoted passage from the Hebrews; and it is properly rendered when we speak of the collection of writings by the Evangelists and Apostles as "the New Testament." The Septu-

agint Version also properly uses the same Greek word, διαθήκη, as the translation of the Hebrew word which our English translators erroneously rendered "covenant." The very essence or root of that Greek word implies it to be a mortuary deed, or Testament, which only comes into operation on the death and burial of the testator; literally, "through his tomb."

5. "*This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel; under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foresignifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.*"

Nothing shows more clearly than this clause how confused were the ideas of the Westminster Divines regarding the two Covenants or Testaments. Having mistaken the person with whom the First Covenant was made, it was of course to be expected that they would fail to see with whom the Second was made, and when it came into operation. It just shows how far wrong men will go when they forsake the pure word of God, and trust to the glosses or Commentaries of men, however learned these may be in their eyes.

It is scarcely credible that any attentive reader of the Bible should make such a glaring blunder as to assert that the Covenant of Grace existed at all, so long as the First Covenant, or Covenant of Works, was in force. In the

passages we have more than once quoted (p. 116), it has been already shown that the introduction of the New Covenant abolished the first Covenant. It was further shown by the quotation just made from Paul's writings (Heb. ix. 16–20), that the Covenant of Grace was only brought into operation, and, of course, was first introduced into the world, on the death of Jesus, the Testator of the New Covenant; for, to use Paul's own phrase, it was only of force after the Testator was dead, otherwise it was of no strength at all while the Testator lived. It was therefore a perfect impossibility that the Covenant of Grace could ever be administered in any form whatever till Jesus died. It was, therefore, absolutely impossible for the Covenant of Grace to be administered, while the First Covenant was still in force. Now Jesus did not die in the days of Moses or of Abraham, or of Adam, but in the days of Pontius Pilate, only a few short years before the Jewish nation was destroyed as a nation; and as it was only by his death that he introduced into the world the New Covenant, it was a manifest impossibility for it to be administered before it was even revealed.

The Westminster Divines evidently did not know what the New Covenant was, nor when it was revealed. They evidently got quite confused with the words "Covenant" and "Testament" in the English Translation, and did not know that it was the same Greek word, which was generally mistranslated by the word "Covenant," and only in one single passage properly translated "Testament." They evidently did not know that the First Testament (or Covenant as they termed it) and "the Law" was one and the same thing; and were utterly ignorant that "The Ten Commandments" were that First Covenant or Testament. Not knowing any of these facts relative to the First Testament, they equally mistook everything regarding the Second Tes-

tament. They evidently did not know that it was the New Testament; the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which only could come into operation on his death and resurrection; and yet they might easily have known this fact, seeing that Mark, when he introduces his Gospel to us, says, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God."

The fact is, if the nonsense promulgated by the Confession were true, then no man excepting Adam lived under the First Covenant or Testament. Nay, more than this, if the doctrines taught on this subject by the Confession were true, then both the First and the Second Covenants must have been made with Adam: the *First*, before he sinned, and while he lived in the Garden of Eden; the *Second*, immediately after his Fall, and his expulsion from that Garden. It has already been shown how satisfactorily Paul's teaching settles all such erroneous statements, so that nothing further need here be added.

Had the Jews been living under the Second Covenant, or Second Testament as we have already proved all these covenants ought to be termed, then half of Paul's Epistles would never have been written. The drift of the great portion of these is to invite and induce the Jew to leave the First Testament, the Law, which Christ's death had abolished, and put themselves under the New Testament, or Testament of Grace, which Jesus by his death introduced into the world. To induce them to do this, Paul applies strong epithets to that First Testament written and engraven on stones; for he styles it an enmity, a yoke of bondage, a ministration of condemnation, a ministration of death. That it must have pressed heavily on the Jew, both Paul and Peter more than once testify;—when Paul feelingly calls on the converts at Corinth to beware that they "be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage," 2 Cor. iv. 24; and when Peter cried out in the Public Assembly at Jerusa-

lem, when some Jewish Christians were endeavouring to force the keeping of the Law on Christians, "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Acts xv. 10. These two circumstances of themselves, independent of all other facts prove, that at the very time Paul and Peter spoke, that First Testament, that Mosaical Law, these Ten Commandments, that yoke of bondage, pressed hard on the Jew. That fact of itself proves that the New Testament, the Gospel of Grace, had only been newly introduced, and all the Jews then living, excepting those few who had become Christians, were still under the bondage of the Mosaical Law, or First Testament, or First Covenant, for all these are synonymous terms. How else can we interpret Paul's words to the Galatians: "Before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up into the faith which should afterwards be revealed"? Gal. iii. 23.

It is clear, then, as words can make it, that the Covenant or Testament of Grace never could have been administered in the time of the Law—*i.e.*, in the time of the First Covenant or First Testament.

But the same fact is unmistakeably taught by Paul when he is contrasting the Gospel of Jesus Christ with that First Covenant, "the Law of Moses." If these Laws, under which the Jews lived, were under the Covenant or Testament of Grace, then that law would have given "justification" to all those who lived under it. But so very much the opposite was the case, that Paul says: "All that believe (in Christ) are justified from all things, *from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses*." Acts xiii. 39. Paul in that passage speaks common sense. If the First Testament, or Mosaical Law, vulgarly styled the "Covenant of Works," could have justified the guilty, then the Second or New Testament, the Covenant or Testament of Grace,

brought in by the death of Jesus, was not required. But this passage, and the whole tenor of the Gospel, show that the New Testament, the Testament of Grace, sealed with the precious death of Christ, was absolutely necessary for the justification and salvation of the sinner.

The Jews themselves made no such mistakes as that into which the Westminster Divines and Calvinists fell. They quite understood they were under a Covenant or Testament of Works. We talk learnedly of types and antitypes, because Paul in his immortal writings has so clearly pointed them out to us. But, had it not been for Paul's writings, even we Christians should no more have fancied such things than the Jews themselves. The Jew had no idea whatever that any one of his ceremonies, rites, or sacrifices foreshadowed Christ. We have not even such a thing hinted at in the most hazy manner in any part of the Old Testament. Even the Feast of the Passover, so pregnant with meaning to us, since Paul opened our understandings to it, was never deemed by the Jew to foreshadow Christ, because Christ was not *revealed* in any part of the Old Testament. The Passover was held by the Jew, aye up to the day of our Saviour's death, with the sole object of keeping in remembrance the escape from the destroying angel, and their wonderful deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Seeing then that the above clause of the Confession expresses an untruth, it must be deleted from this, and every other creed, which professes to take the Scriptures as the alone basis of Christian Faith.

6. "*Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the*

Lord's Supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations."

This clause blunders on in the same admirable confusion as was pointed out to exist in the former clauses of this chapter. The Westminster Divines evidently felt themselves in a fix; and not able to deny that the Covenant or Testament of Grace is styled the New Testament (mistranslated the "New Covenant") in Paul's writings, appear to have added the concluding paragraph, which proves their utter ignorance of what the two Testaments were.

It has already been fully proved that wherever the word "covenant" is met with in our English Translation of the New Testament, and in many parts of the Old, that the word "Testament" should be substituted, as the appropriate rendering of the Greek and Hebrew word. It has also been fully proved that the various epithets, First Covenant, First Testament, the Law, the Laws of Moses, and the Ten Commandments, all express one and the same thing; while the phrases, Second Covenant, Second Testament, New Testament, and Covenant or Testament of Grace, likewise refer to that one and same Testament which is constantly in the Scriptures contrasted with the first of these. It has accordingly been pointed out that Paul settles authoritatively all such erroneous statements as that the Testament of Grace had any existence, or even was administered, under the Law, or First, or Old Testament, by informing us that it had no existence, was not even revealed, till the death of

Christ, and never could be acted on or put in force till the death of Christ the testator. Nay more, he even informs the Jewish converts that by their having become Christians they "are not under the Law, but under Grace." Rom. vi. 14. His words to the Galatians are even more explicit, for he says: "Before Faith (the Gospel) came, we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the Faith (ignorant of the Gospel) which should afterwards be revealed." Gal. iii. 23.

In concluding our Remarks on this chapter, it is well to direct attention to the fact that many of the statements in it are flatly contradicted by the first two clauses of Chap. XIX., and another, and very different version given of what the Covenant of Works was, and how long it continued in operation. Such is the difference between the blundering works of men, and the perfect and harmonious works of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR.

1. "*It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only-begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Saviour of his Church; the Heir of all things; and Judge of the world: unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.*"

On more than one occasion it has been found necessary to challenge the use of the phrases "Eternal," and "from all Eternity," as used in the clauses of the Confession. These phrases are generally misapplied from their meaning having been misunderstood; and, as it may save repetition in other places, it is well distinctly to explain their meaning as used in the Scriptures.

Unless the words "eternal," "everlasting," and "for ever," are used with reference to God himself, they never mean "from all Eternity." Yet in almost every instance the Westminster Divines interpreted them to have that meaning, and used them with that signification in their Confession of Faith. These three phrases, however, have in general a very different meaning indeed, and their significations are diverse, according to the subject, or person spoken of at the time. For instance, we Christians are promised in the New Testament eternal life, everlasting life, an eternal inheritance, eternal redemption, etc. But that does not mean life, or an inheritance from all eternity; but only life, and an inheritance ever hereafter from this point of time.

Most commonly, however, these phrases are much more limited in their meaning, and only mean "for a very long time," or "for the period of a nation's life," or "for the life of a generation." It is very important to notice this fact, because it is from not knowing it that the Westminster divines, when speaking of the Covenants and laws of God, and God's immutability, have made the grossest blunders. Thus God said to Abraham, "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." Gen. xiii. 15. And again, "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession." Gen. xvii. 8. Now events, the history of the world, prove that these words never meant "for ever," nor "for

everlasting," as we moderns understand the meaning of these words. Events, which are God's own handwriting (just as much as his revealed will), prove to us that these phrases only meant: the Land of Canaan would be the possession of the Jews for a long time, viz., so long as they remained an independent free nation. These phrases, therefore, only mean in these passages: "for the length of a nation's life."

In the following important passages the phrases "for ever," and "everlasting," have exactly the same limited meaning. Of the Passover it is said: "Ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." Exod. xii. 14. Of circumcision it is said: "My Covenant (Testament) shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant (Testament)." Gen. xvii. 13. Of the Priesthood of Aaron it was said: "It shall be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." Exod. xl. 15. And of the Covenant, or Testament, made with Abraham, and renewed with Moses and the Children of Israel, which was done away and abolished by the Death of Jesus, it is written: "I will establish my Covenant (Testament) between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant (Testament)." Gen. xvii. 7. "And confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting Covenant (Testament)." Ps. cv. 10.

Now every one of these strong phrases means only: for the period during which the Israelites remained as a distinct free nation—"for the nation's life."

But these very phrases are sometimes used in a more limited sense still, viz., "for the lifetime of a family," or even "for the lifetime of an individual." Thus of the slaves made from strangers it was written: "They shall be your bondmen for ever." Lev. xxv. 46. Of Elisha's servant it was said: "The Leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave

unto thee and unto thy seed for ever." 2 Kings v. 27. And of the Jew who had been sold into bondage, and would not go out free without his wife, it was written: "His master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever." Exod. xxi. 6.

In reading the Old Testament Scriptures, therefore, it becomes us to be very careful how we interpret the meaning of the words "for ever," "everlasting," and "eternal." In almost every case we may be sure they have a limited meaning, and not that invariably assigned to them by the Westminster divines.

The above clause of the Confession, however, interprets another phrase used in the Scripture, viz., "before the foundation of the world," as if it also meant "from all Eternity." It has no such meaning. It also has a limited meaning, like the other phrases above mentioned. Eternity existed myriads of ages before this world was framed; and all that the Scripture phrase "before the foundation of the world" means, is simply this, that when God made all the arrangements for this world, before fitting it as a habitation for man, he made also the arrangements for the redemption of mankind, alluded to in the passage from which the above quotation is taken. These arrangements, so far as Scripture speaks, were not made "from all eternity," neither were they made "in his eternal purpose," as the above clause hath it. They were only made before man was created, or before the world was framed as a fit habitation for him. But that was at no distant period; that was done at a point of time so infinitely small as compared with eternity, as to be scarcely measurable; and, according to the Mosaic account, only about six thousand years ago.

These two phrases, then, "in his eternal purpose," and

"from all eternity," must be deleted from the above clause. The other statements may be received, as they seem to be agreeable to the revealed Will of God.

2. "*The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.*"

The words "the Second Person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God," must be deleted from the above clause, as no Confession or Creed should presume to know more of the mysteries of the divine nature than what the Scriptures distinctly reveal. Now there can be no doubt whatever that there is no such word as "Trinity" in any part of the Sacred Scriptures; neither is there any such phrases as "Persons in the Trinity," or "Persons in the Godhead." In my remarks on the third clause of Chap. II. of the Confession, I have shortly proved that the whole doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is a Philosophico-theological Dogma which is opposed to the revelations of Scripture. In fact, that doctrine is not founded on the Scriptures at all, but on that Philosophy called Logic or Metaphysics, which in various forms, from the second Century of the

Church, down to our own day, has thoroughly disguised or perverted the truths of Christianity.

But the very basis on which these philosophers found that doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is false, because they assume as true that which the Scriptures prove is false; viz., that Jesus possesses all the attributes of God, and therefore must be God. The Scriptures, however, only casually compare the existence of two attributes of God, with these same attributes in Jesus; or rather, they mention facts regarding each which enable us to compare them. In both these instances the Scripture statements clearly disprove the averments of the metaphysicians; for in both these instances they declare that Jesus does not possess these attributes in anything like the perfection in which they exist in the Supreme God.

Thus we know that one of the attributes of God is Omniscience. But the Scriptures twice inform us that Jesus does not possess that attribute in the perfect form in which it exists in the Supreme God; for they say, "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Matt. xiii. 32. And again: "The revelation of Jesus Christ which the God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." Rev. i. 1.

But another, and even more important attribute of the Supreme God is existence from all Eternity. But the Scriptures assign a beginning to Jesus Christ every time they name him as "the Son of God." That phrase necessarily implies, and is intended to convey to us the notion, that God existed before his Son Jesus. And the Scriptures do not leave us in any doubt on the subject; for John says, "In the beginning was the Word." That phrase "in the beginning" necessarily implies that point of time when the only Son was begotten of the Father. It is therefore,

necessarily a point of Time, and not an existence from Eternity. This is very plainly and convincingly evidenced by Paul's writings, for he styles Jesus "the first-born of every creature," Col. i. 15; and in another Epistle, alluding to the same fact, he says: "When he (God) bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Heb. i. 6. This passage, therefore, not only confirms the teaching of the other parts of the Scriptures that Jesus had a beginning, but *it almost implies that there were angelic inhabitants in Heaven before Jesus was begotten of the Father.* But Paul still further confirms the view as to Jesus having a beginning by quoting God as saying: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Heb. i. 5. The apostle John speaks the very same language as to Jesus having a beginning, and being in this respect unlike God, who alone exists from Eternity; for he styles Jesus "the beginning of the Creation of God." Rev. iii. 14.

These passages, then, clearly teach that Jesus does not possess the attributes of God in anything like the perfection in which they exist in his God and Father; and, indeed, does not possess that attribute which is the essential attribute of the Supreme God and Father of all,—viz., Existence from all Eternity. Now, as these are the only attributes of which the Scriptures deign to give us any particulars as to their comparative perfection in the Supreme God and in Jesus, we are clearly at liberty to infer that all the other attributes will be in exactly the same position.

The whole metaphysico-theological Dogma, then, of the Trinity in Unity, being founded on a false basis, falls to the ground, and leaves not a wreck behind.

But the Metaphysical Theologians who defend the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, finding that Jesus is invariably represented in Scripture as inferior to God the Father,

quiet their consciences by assuming, as the reason for this, that Jesus is always mentioned there "in his official capacity" as Intercessor or Mediator. It seems never to have occurred to these philosophers that Jesus would never be mentioned at all, but because he is our Intercessor with the Father. Man's whole interest in Jesus is because he is our sacrifice, propitiation, surety; and that he now sits on God's right hand in heaven acting as our Mediator and Intercessor. The whole New Testament is for the sole purpose of teaching us that great fact; and therefore showing us how we ought to conduct ourselves, seeing God has done such great things for us.

But what will the Trinitarians say if a passage be recorded in the Scriptures which speaks in the clearest of language of Jesus, not in his official capacity, but of the state or condition he is to assume after he lays down his Mediatorial office? If such a passage exists, then, if there is the slightest truth in the Trinitarian Doctrine, that passage will declare that Jesus, on laying aside his mediatorial office, becomes (to use their own phrase) "very and eternal God," not only becoming equal with God, but becoming the very God himself. But what saith the passage? "Then cometh the end, when he (Jesus) shall have delivered up the kingdom to the God and Father. . . . . Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that the God may be all in all." 1 Cor. xv. 24.

This passage, then, of itself authoritatively settles the whole Trinitarian controversy; for it shows that when Jesus shall lay down his Mediatorial office, he will neither become "equal with God," nor become "the very God," *but he will reassume the character and station of a subject*—that same station which he no doubt held before he was chosen of God to become the Saviour of the world.

That passage, then, and this conclusion, beautifully har-

monize with the whole writings of the Holy Scriptures. It must be remembered that Jesus himself, and all his Apostles whose writings are preserved in the New Testament, tell us distinctly that God the Father is "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ." Nay, Paul and Peter, in the course of their writings, repeat this truth no fewer than seven times (see p. 46). Even Jesus himself, in the last Revelation of his will from Heaven, tells us the same fact, that God is his God: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God." Rev. iii. 12.

These passages, and that teaching, are quite irreconcilable with the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity; and even though Scripture had not so clearly taught an opposite doctrine to that taught by the Confession, no Creed or Confession should presume to dip deeper into the Mysteries of the Divine Nature than what God has been pleased to reveal to us in his Word. And, in talking of such subjects, of which we can know nothing but from Revelation, we ought invariably and always to limit ourselves to the very words of Scripture.

But, unlike the works of fallible man, a harmony pervades both the works and also the revelations of God; and the more deeply the Scriptures are studied, the more clearly will it appear that the doctrines which I endeavour to teach on this subject are those alone which thoroughly harmonize with the whole of the revealed will of God.

If Christ were the "very God," as the Trinitarians assert, how could God be the head of Christ? "The head of Christ is God." 1 Cor. xi. 3. How also could Christ be "the head of the Church, which is his body"? Eph. i. 22; Col. i. 18. How also in that case could Jesus be the

"chief corner stone" of the Church? Eph. ii. 20. How in that case could he retain his human body, which he took with him to heaven? How could he sit on the right hand of God if he were the very God? How could he intercede for us, if he himself were the person to whom he was to offer that intercession? Why in that case is he never represented as doing his own will, but the will of the Father who sent him? Fifty similar questions might be asked, all of which could only be answered by quibbles, if the Trinity in Unity views be upheld; but all of which receive a ready, an intelligible, and a reasonable answer, if the views which I uphold are, as I firmly believe, the only truths conformable to the teaching of Scripture.

The first part of the clause, then, ought simply to have said, "Jesus, the Son of God, when the fulness of time was come, took upon him man's nature, and, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of Mary, was born into the world as a human babe."

It is truly surprising in a Protestant Confession of Faith to find the name "Virgin Mary." I do not find a single passage, from the beginning to the end of the New Testament, where that title is given to Mary. Two of the Evangelists, it is quite true, state her condition, that she was not a widow, nor a mother, but a pure unmarried woman, or virgin, when she conceived Jesus. But that statement gives her no claim to the title of "Virgin Mary." In the Scriptures she is simply styled "Mary," or "Mary the Mother of Jesus," or "his mother," but never the "Virgin Mary." In fact, it is just as absurd to call her "the Virgin Mary," as it would to style our beloved Queen, "our Virgin Queen Victoria." The titles would be equally applicable in both cases. Even if Mary had but one child, and that child Jesus, she could no longer be a virgin. The Scriptures were literally fulfilled in that it was a virgin,

and neither a married woman who had been a mother, nor a widow, who was the mother of Jesus. But the Scriptures declare that Mary had a large family; and that, besides her first-born Jesus, she had four sons, named James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, besides several daughters. Jesus, too, is never called her only son, but always her first-born, which necessarily implies that she had other children. And if such a prolific woman merits the title of "Virgin" Mary, might I inquire when a woman loses the title of virgin, and acquires that of mother?

But this clause says that Jesus "did take upon him man's nature with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin." In the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, however, which are only this Confession put as question and answer, and hence in plainer words, it is said, that Christ was "conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin." These phrases, as used and applied to Jesus, necessarily imply, and are meant to teach, that every human creature who is born into this world is born *with* sin; but that, when Jesus was born as a babe, the common law of nature was changed for him, and he was born *without* sin.

I have been unable to find any passage in the Scriptures which makes such a distinction between the Birth of Jesus, and that of every human being. He came into this world to be born as a human being, and to assume our whole nature with all its infirmities *and sins, if that nature had such at birth.* The Scriptures are quite clear on that subject: "Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren." Heb. ii. 17. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." John iii. 16. As Jesus, therefore, was born of a woman, with a fleshly body, of the seed of David, he must have brought with that fleshly body all

the good or evil which every descendant of Adam brings into the world. If Adam's descendants bring Sin with them into the world; so must Jesus have brought with his human body. If, on the other hand, Adam's descendants (if born of legally married parents) bring no sin at birth; then Jesus, like other human children, *was born without sin.* We nowhere read that Jesus was exempt from the common lot of humanity in this respect; but, on the other hand, we are assured that he was in all things made like unto his brethren of the human family.

It is a gross mistake to imagine that a child brings Sin with it into the world at its birth. He is a creature *prone to Sin;* and, because he is born of mortal creatures, he must die. But is folly to imagine that if born of legally married parents, he inherits sin from them. Paul assures us that "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." Heb. xiii. 4. And again: "If thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned." 1 Cor. vii. 22. And Paul follows up these statements by saying of the children born of such legal marriages, "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." Heb. vii. 14.

Now the Scriptures agree in ascribing no sin to Jesus. The inference, therefore, is as clear as any conclusion can be, that no child born of a woman brings sin with it into the world. It only brings with it a proneness or tendency to sin, which leads to the commission of actual sins during life.

But the Scriptures all assume that Jesus, like every child of Adam, was born without sin; for they never talk of his birth being without sin, but they carefully limit that statement to his life. "Jesus was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. iv. 15. "He did no sin." 1 Peter ii. 22. "He knew no sin." 2 Cor. v. 21. "In

him is no sin." 1 John iii. 5. All these passages alone refer to his holy life, which was separate from sinners; but they make no assertion that Jesus was in any respects different at his birth from his brethren of the human race. When speaking of "original sin" at p. 91, it was shown that no child inherits sin from its parents. Jesus consequently inherited none. Our catechisms therefore have great need to be amended.

To the latter portion of the above clause of the Confession it is impossible to agree, for it is arrant nonsense; the inference of men who were entirely ignorant of the nature of the human body, and who misunderstood what the Scriptures really state; for the Scriptures speak very plainly on that subject, but quite differently from what the clause avers. The above clause says: "so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one Person, without conversion, composition, or confusion."

What is a perfect man? A perfect man is "a fleshly body united with a living Spirit which animates it." The man, however, is not the corporeal body; the corporeal body is rather the casket in which the Jewel is contained. The individuality resides in the Spirit which never dies; but which lives when the body is rotting in the grave, and while its atoms go to compose other organized or unorganized bodies on the surface of the earth.

Now, if the divine Spirit of Jesus united itself with a perfect man, as this clause avers, then the man Jesus who was seen on earth was not Jesus the Christ, but only the body of a man inspired by the Spirit of Jesus. For if it were a perfect man into which the Spirit of Jesus had entered, there would be in the same human body, at the same time, the Spirit, or truly living part of the man, and the Spirit of Jesus; so that, of necessity there would have

been both composition and confusion. But the Scriptures make no such statement as this clause does. They never say that the divine Spirit of Jesus united with a perfect man. All that the Scriptures assert, and all that we are required to believe, is, that *Jesus while on earth manifested himself to us in a fleshly body.* Indeed, the Scriptures are very explicit on this very point. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John i. 14. "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Acts ii. 30; Rom. i. 3. "The fathers, of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." Rom. ix. 5. "Neither did his flesh see corruption." Acts ii. 31. "Yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh." Col. i. 22. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity." Eph. ii. 15.

Now, if even these few passages be carefully considered, it will be seen that all that the divine Spirit of Jesus assumed when he became man was "a fleshly body;" the Spirit of Jesus taking that part which, in the mere man, is occupied by the human soul. Peter's quotation in Acts, and his comment on that quotation, is itself demonstrative of this. Peter says "that his soul was not left in Hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." Acts ii. 31. He only recognised the Spirit of Christ, and a corruptible human body—a fleshly body.

But, the fact is, there is not the slightest authority in the Scriptures for the absurd statement in the Confession. The soul of man himself is but an emanation from the Deity, and in the Old Scripture narrative is styled his breath. "And the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Gen. ii. 7. When Jesus, therefore, assumed our human nature, he merely assumed a fleshly body; and that fleshly body, when animated by his Spirit, became a living body; the Spirit of Jesus taking that life-giving part which, with us, is occupied

by our souls. In such an union there could neither be confusion, nor conversion; but there would decidedly have been both, had the Spirit of Jesus entered into the body of a perfect man.

Following up their confused notions, the Westminster Divines assert in this clause, "that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the human and divine, *were inseparably joined together in one person*." If this were so, how did it happen that the Spirit of Jesus left the human body hanging dead on the cross, and forsaken in the grave for three whole days? That surely did not show an inseparable union. On the other hand, we must acknowledge that it was a true separation—as true a separation as arrives to all of us when we die. Nay more, if we believe the Scriptures (and not the protestant silly expositions), we must believe that while the Spirit of Jesus was separated from his body, his Spirit went to the place where the Spirits of men are kept, viz., Hades, erroneously translated Hell in our versions. Jesus himself said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." We know this was not of the thief's body he was speaking, but of his soul. Conform to this, and bearing out the same teaching of Jesus, are the words of the Psalmist, quoted by Peter as referring to this very subject, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades." Acts ii. 27. And the same subject is again spoken to by Peter, who says that Jesus, after his death on the cross, by his Spirit "went and preached unto the Spirits in prison;" and to show that he really meant that of which we are now speaking, he added, "For this was the gospel preached unto them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." 1 Pet. iv. 6.

All these numerous fallacies would have been avoided had the Composers of the Confession not been so very

wordy, and entered into such minute particulars on abstruse points, on which points Scripture is either altogether silent, or speaks a language quite at variance with, and opposed to the false deductions which these Westminster Divines endeavoured to convince us were the teachings of Scripture. Many of the points which they teach as doctrines are not Scripture Doctrines at all; but are inferences, which are true or false according to the knowledge which they possessed of facts in Science, or according to their ability to interpret Scripture aright. We have already seen on how many points they have deviated from the Truths of Scripture; and the above is another to add to that number.

3. "*The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure; having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell: to the end, that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety. Which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father; who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.*"

4. "*This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he may discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which*

he suffered; with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world."

Generally, I agree to the above clauses. It is quite surprising, however, that the Westminster Divines, who are so fond of prolixity, and do not hesitate adding to the Scripture statements on other occasions, should in this fourth clause slur over the Scripture Statements as to the condition of Jesus after his death, by only saying "he was buried, and remained under the power of death."

If Jesus were indeed divine, and possessed a divine Spirit (of which we are assured by the Scriptures), then it is quite apparent that that Spirit could not die; it could, therefore, only be the mortal or fleshly body, which remained under the power of death. But the body itself could not die, if the Spirit remained inseparably united to it (as the Confession asserts). Yet the fact that Jesus did die on the cross, proved that the Spirit had left the body. The dead body of Jesus was removed from the cross, and was buried; and it, therefore, was under the power of death, and remained so for three days.

What then became of the Spirit? Do the Scriptures give us no information on the subject, seeing that the above clauses give us none? Yes they do! and much important information also. Even David in the Psalms distinctly mentions the subject, and notes the very different treatment and condition of the Spirit and the fleshly body. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." Ps. xvi. 10. Peter fully explains these words in the first public sermon which he gave after the resurrection of Jesus. He said: "David seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of

Christ, that his Soul was not left in Hades, neither his flesh did see corruption." Acts ii. 31. Jesus also said to the penitent thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Luke xxiii. 43. That, of course, was not speaking of the mortal body, which was left hanging on the cross, but of his spiritual part, or soul; so that Paradise and Hades must mean the same place. But Peter goes a little further, and tells us what the Spirit of Jesus did in Hades while his body was resting in the grave; for he says: "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached to the Spirits in Prison." 1 Peter iii. 18. But Jesus himself while yet on earth announced that this was part of his mission; for he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear shall live." John v. 25. And Peter not only, in the above quoted clause, tells us how Jesus fulfilled this prediction of his, but also in further confirmation of it adds, "For this cause was the gospel preached also unto them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." 1 Peter iv. 6.

The Apostles' Creed, as it is commonly termed, gives the true Scripture meaning of the above passages; only that its real teaching is obscured by translating the Greek word "Hades" by the inappropriate English word "Hell." The Creed says, "He descended into Hell;" it ought to have said, "He descended into Hades,"—that is, to the place where the Souls of men rest or are confined till the Great Day of Judgment.

It must not be inferred from these remarks that I object to the statement as made in the Confession, though it ought certainly to have been much more explicit. I only express my wonder, that the very men who on all occasions dip

deeper in the mysteries of God, and of the world to come, than what the Scriptures reveal to us, should have made such a bald and unsatisfactory statement relative to a subject much agitated by the Papists, and on which Scripture certainly does give us some explicit information. No doubt it was their fear of countenancing any Popish doctrine which was the cause of this; as if truth should be concealed, because those who are opposed to us on some points may have appreciated part of that truth, but perverted it to most unworthy ends.

5. "*The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.*"

This clause I believe to be agreeable to the Scriptures.

6. "*Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof, were communicated unto the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed and signified to be the Seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and to-day the same, and for ever.*"

I cannot say that (as I read the Scriptures) there is the

slightest intimation that one single person who lived before the birth of Christ had the slightest idea that any of the sacrifices under the Mosaic law, or promises revealed to them through the prophets, had the slightest reference to a Saviour or Redeemer whose death was to save them. Nay more, not one of the ancient Sages had the slightest idea that the Messiah promised by the Prophets was typified in any of their sacrifices; or that that Messiah was any other than a Temporal Prince. The assertions, therefore, in this clause are wholly unsupported by Scripture. In fact, this knowledge was only revealed to us by Christ and his Apostles,—mainly, indeed, through the writings of the Apostle Paul; and but for Paul's writings we should just have been as ignorant as the ancient Jews, and never have known that the sacrifices, promises, etc., in the Old Testament writings were types, revealing the Mediator, Christ Jesus.

Just let us take common sense for our guide in looking at the revealed word, and see whether any intelligible revelation, such as this clause asserts, was ever made to any of the inhabitants of the world up to the days of Abraham or of Moses. It has already been clearly shown, when commenting on the Third Chapter of this Confession, that there were no "Elect," that is, no "chosen people of God," till God selected Abraham and certain of his descendants to be his "elect," his "chosen people." Up to the days of Abraham, therefore, there were no "elect" to whom any communication could have been made relative to Christ. Let us see, however, whether any kind of communication was made at all to any of the human race up to Abraham's day.

Till the days of Abraham, the only occurrence we read of in the Scriptures which can be distorted so as to have the most distant bearing on this subject, is not a promise at all,

but is the curse pronounced on the Serpent. "And the Lord God said unto the Serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. iii. 15.

Well! that is enigmatical enough, if it has any reference to a coming Redeemer! So enigmatical, that clever as Metaphysico-theologians are at the present day, I defy them to extract from these words the assertion made in this clause, that it was a communication to the Elect of any virtue, efficacy, and benefit to be derived from Christ's sacrifice. Yet this is the only enigmatical shadow of a promised Redeemer (if such be its sense) which the inhabitants of the world had for more than three thousand years!

I myself, however, have very great doubts as to that passage having any reference whatever to Christ. There is not one hint given in any part of Scripture that it has such a reference. Paul, in quoting the Old Testament, only speaks of Jesus as "of the seed of Abraham." "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. iii. 16. Now if such a remarkable passage had any reference to Christ, it would undoubtedly have been quoted somewhere in the New Testament, and its application to Christ shown; but the very fact that it is never so quoted, proves to my mind, infallibly, that it has sole reference to the enmity which continually exists between the race of mankind and the race of serpents—man, while walking, treading them under foot and bruising their heads, and they in revenge biting him on the heel or foot.

If this, then, be its true meaning, and there can be no doubt about it, the world was left for more than three thousand years without the slightest intimation being conveyed to it that any Redeemer was to arise; or that any sacrifice

which he was to offer would cleanse them from their sins. The assertions made in this clause of the Confession are therefore quite unsupported by Scripture, and must be deleted as false.

But even the Jews, the chosen people of God, were not a bit more enlightened on this subject, even though they had the revealed Will of God in their hands. With all their knowledge of the Law, with all their study of the prophecies, they neither believed nor felt that any virtue, efficacy, or benefit, such as that to which this clause refers, was communicated or made known to them. The fact is, that the Jew never knew that any one of his sacrifices foreshadowed Christ. They read the Old Testament writings with a vail on their hearts; and Paul authoritatively states that even up to his day the vail was upon their hearts: "Their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament." 2 Cor. iii. 14. Even the sacrifice of the paschal Lamb was never by any one imagined to have any reference to a coming Redeemer. And even we, with all our more perfect knowledge, would never have suspected any such connection, had not Paul, through the agency of his writings, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, revealed it unto us.

The Westminster Divines, from mistaking the words used in a highly poetical book, with obscure oriental imagery, have evidently been led astray to make some of the assertions in the above clause. The phrase, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8, simply means, "The Lamb who, in the counsels of God when he framed the earth, was predestinated to be slain in due time."

7. "*Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures; by each nature doing that which is*

proper to itself: yet, by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature."

The first part of this clause is true, and agreeable to the Scriptures. But the latter half of the clause is founded on a mistaken interpretation of certain passages, whose meaning is not at all obscure, because many other passages properly interpret them. One of these passages as quoted, takes the English translation, which gives a faulty reading of the original Greek. "Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us." 1 John iii. 13. In the best Greek versions, the words "of God" are not found. Indeed it is generally allowed that no such words were ever written; and the whole context is speaking, not of God, but of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The other passage quoted in defence of the above statement is in Acts xx. 28, which speaks of the Holy Ghost having purchased the church of God with his own blood. As it is the only passage in the New Testament which speaks thus of the Holy Ghost, it is a safe inference that the text must have been altered in some way; and if it is allowed to stand as it is, then it must be interpreted to mean, what all the other parts of the Scriptures declare to be the truth, that it was *Jesus* who purchased it with his own blood; That, in fact, the word "Jesus" must have been left out in copying the text originally. It is thus apparent that the latter portion of the clause ought to be deleted; for even though it rested on the apparent meaning of a single solitary clause of Scripture, that single clause must not be laid hold of to found any doctrine, or avouch for the truth of any statement, unless it be confirmed and supported by other texts which treat of the same subject, and speak the same language. No one can assert

that of the texts quoted in support of the averments in the latter half of the above clause; therefore these statements must be deleted.

8. "*To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them; and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by his word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.*"

Before I could agree to all here stated, I would require to know what the Westminster divines meant by "Redemption."

The Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments speak a great deal about Redemption, and Redeeming. Let us understand what these words imply. The proper idea of "Redeeming" is "to buy back again," either persons who have been sold into slavery, or property of a family which had fallen into the hands of strangers. To redeem, then, necessarily implies that a price, or ransom of some kind, shall be paid. In process of time, however, the same word was used to express deliverance from any calamity or evil, or even the restoration of persons or things to their proper owners or proper use when no ransom or price of any kind was paid.

The Person who gave this freedom, or who bought back the slave or property, was styled "the Redeemer." But the old Eastern notion, which was adopted in the Old Testament

writings, was that the person who had the legal right to redeem must be the head of the tribe or family to whom the person who was in slavery belonged; but this right he was allowed to waive in favour of the next eldest of the tribe or family. This right resulted from the patriarchal form of government originally followed by the Eastern tribes, the Head of each tribe or family considering all the members of that tribe or family as his property, having the power of life and death over them, or of selling them for his debts. Hence in the Old Testament God himself, who was the temporal (as well as the eternal) King of the Israelites, because he delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, was styled their Redeemer. "The Lord your God redeemed you out of the House of Bondage." Deut. xiii. 5. "Thus saith the Lord your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Is. xliii. 14. In like manner Boaz was Ruth's Redeemer. "Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a Redeemer." Ruth iv. 14 (mistranslated "kinsman" in our English Bible). Job, too, speaks of his confident expectation that his Redeemer will appear and free him from his diseases and misfortunes. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth." xix. 25. And his expectation was not deceived, for the Poem represents God appearing as his Redeemer: "And the Lord turned the Captivity of Job." xlii. 10. To the Christian, again, Christ, because he was constituted the "Head of the Church," is the appointed "Redeemer;" and though this title is never directly given to him, yet he is continually alluded to as such by saying of him, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Rev. v. 9. "In whom we have redemption through his blood." Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14, etc.

The word "redemption" appears to be used erroneously

in the above clause, and with far too limited a meaning—a meaning not so limited in any part of the Scriptures. In fact, the redemption spoken of in that clause is used in the same limited way as in former clauses the words Elect and Election were used, and it connects things with redemption never so associated in the Scriptures. In fact, the clause makes the redemption of which it speaks a Christian grace, the possession of which leads to other Christian benefits. In the Scriptures, however, the Christian redemption is not a means, but the very end of the Christian dispensation—even the redemption of our souls and bodies from sin and from Satan, and our consecration to God. This subject is further illustrated in another form in our Remarks on Chap. X.

CHAPTER IX.

OF FREE-WILL.

1. "*God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil.*"
2. "*Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.*"
3. "*Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able,*

by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

4. "*When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.*"
5. "*The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone in the state of glory only.*"

In my opinion the less said about Free-will in a Confession of Faith the better. Nothing likely to be said on the subject can make it intelligible to our limited faculties: therefore the whole subject ought to be omitted altogether, as the Scriptures do not lay down any doctrines regarding it, as matters of Faith; and anything they do say or teach, is quite opposed to the narrow mistaken views above enunciated.

It will be seen that the first and third clauses are wholly and irreconcilably opposed to each other. If man by his fall "hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good," then it follows, as a strictly logical conclusion, that "he is forced by an absolute necessity to do evil." He is not, therefore, a free being. He has no free-will. I only venture to remark, that the whole scheme of salvation is founded on the supposition that man's will is free—absolutely free. Therefore any doctrines founded on detached passages of Scripture, and which seem to teach an opposite doctrine, must be false, arising from the meaning of these passages having been misunderstood.

CHAPTER X.

OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

1. "*All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.*"
2. "*This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.*"
3. "*Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.*"
4. "*Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much*

less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested."

The whole clauses of this chapter being part of the Predestination subject, must be commented on together, premising that all the Remarks on Chap. III., relative to Predestination and Election, apply to this Chapter also, and ought to be read in connection with it.

But here certain statements are made which we must carefully inquire into, in order to ascertain whether they are founded on Scripture, or whether they are not directly opposed to it. Indeed, whenever I find any clause of a Confession ending with a denunciation against those who may dare to think differently, I feel quite sure that the trail of the Serpent is in that clause, and that the Scriptures will be found to teach no such doctrine, but probably the very reverse.

It may, then, be remarked that, supposing the statements in the first clause were true, it would follow that those only could be saved who lived in the world after Christ died; and of these, only that very small portion who had the gospel preached unto them; and of the nominal Christians, only those who were what they style "effectually called." Were this first clause true, it is therefore quite apparent that there could be no possibility of salvation for any inhabitant of the world for at least four thousand years after it was inhabited by man (taking the Mosaic account).

This consideration alone (without either argument or quoting authority from Scripture) proves that the statements made in this clause must be false. We know for

certain that righteous Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Elijah, David, and probably the whole children of Israel, were saved, though they never heard of Christ or his gospel, and of course never could believe in him. Nay, the single fact that Enoch was admitted to heaven at least one, if not two thousand years before the first covenant was made with Moses, and long, long before any types of Christ were given to the world, proves of itself the falsity of the statement made in that first clause.

This consideration renders it quite certain that the Westminster Divines confounded together two things which are in themselves quite distinct: viz., 1st, *The being saved* through the sacrifice which Christ offered for the sins of the whole world; and 2d, The being "*called*," which means a very different thing, and applies solely to those who have had an opportunity of hearing the glad news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Paul at once settles this by asking, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Rom. x. 14.

But the 4th clause of this Chapter limits the mercy and goodness of God in a manner which it is perfectly frightful to contemplate; and demonstrates most unmistakeably the very low notions which the Westminster Divines entertained of the Character of God.

Every religion is based on the ideas which men form of the character of the God who is the object of worship. If their ideas of the character of their God be, that he is a revengeful, jealous being, ever ready to punish for any omission of duty, and who delights in slaying his enemies or those who offend him;—then the religion will be one which inculcates revenge, cruelty, jealousy, hatred, deeds of blood; and the supposed God will be worshipped with

costly sacrifices of beasts, and of men, for the purpose of propitiating his anger, and of feasting him with that in which it is supposed he delights. If, on the other hand, man's idea of the God be that he is a loving and amiable being, constantly watching for opportunities to benefit mankind, and showering down benefits on his worshippers; then the religion will be one which inculcates benevolence, brotherly kindness, charity, and love; and the God will be worshipped as a loving Father whom his worshippers are anxious to please, not as a dread monarch whom they are afraid to approach.

Now any man of observation may easily satisfy himself that the Westminster Divines, utterly ignorant as they were of the purposes of the Old Mosaic Dispensation, took their chief ideas of the Christian's God from the now abolished Old Testament, mixing it up with no small infusion of the old heathen mythology. Instead, therefore, of representing God as he is revealed to us in the New Testament—as a God of love, they represent him as a jealous, unfeeling, unimpassioned, unmerciful, selfish, terrible God, who, without regard for his creatures, but to please his own supreme will, daily created millions of men for no other purpose than that they might be destroyed everlastingly in hell fire. Such being their ideas of the God whom men were to worship, it is not wonderful to find them explaining the religion which men ought to adopt as consistent with that idea of the God. Hence they assert that God, irrespective of the conduct of men, punishes them as he chooses, saving some and destroying others, just as it may please him. Hence they assert that the whole nations of the world are utterly to be destroyed, without the chance being even given them of saving themselves. Hence they assert that, even of those to whom the gospel is offered, very few are to be saved; only those whom they style "the

Elect;" and they are to be saved, not because they believed, or lived good or bad lives, but simply because it pleased God to save them!

We thus see that the God of the Westminster Divines was neither a just God, nor a moral Governor, nor a God who had any love for man whom he had created. And, of course, the Religion which they lay down in the Confession as that which we are to follow, being founded on that blasphemous notion of the character of God, is not Christianity at all, but a variety of Judaico-Molochism, or Judaico-Baalism. It is that same false religion which the Roman Catholic Church holds, and which causes their priests to drown, hang, behead, burn, persecute, nay, torture with every species of cruelty, those who do not conform to their faith, thinking all the time, they are pleasing their God, and doing him a service, for which he will reward them. History has clearly shown us that, if the Protestant Church had had the same power, she too would show how closely her faith in the character of her God corresponded with that of the Roman Catholics; aye, the identity was proved during the very short period when she had a little power allowed her.

Now will any man tell me that the above is the character of the loving God and Father revealed to the Christian in the New Testament? A God so loving, that John even styles him Love itself: "God is Love." A God so loving to his rational creatures, that he sacrificed his only Son to save them from everlasting destruction. A God so loving to us, that would we but open our eyes and examine the whole arrangements of this wonderful world, and the provisions made in, on, and above the Earth for man's happiness, could not fail to trace in all the greatness of God's love to us his rational creatures.

Now our Reason rebels at the low idea which the West-

minster Divines entertained of the only true God, and at their unscriptural teachings as to who shall be saved. The 4th clause at once condemns the whole heathen to everlasting destruction, does not even give them the opportunity of salvation; and even of those who have heard of Christ, limits the number of the saved to a very few indeed. Our reason rebels* at such teaching, and in this our reason is supported by Scripture; for nowhere in Scripture can I make out that such a doctrine is taught as that averred in the 4th clause of this chapter of the Confession. The Scripture teaching is that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world; and though Calvin succeeded in mystifying divines, and they, through their commentaries, misled the people, and shut their eyes to the true meaning of Jesus' sacrifice, we must venture to open their eyes, that they may amend their ideas of the God of Love, and also of the Christian Religion which they profess to believe, but in reality do not know.

As we must begin at the very beginning, allow me to ask what is the main object of the Old and New Testament revelations? The main object of the Old Testament revelations is to make known the existence of one true God, the

* Oliphant, in his Narrative of Lord Elgin's Mission to China and Japan, vol. 2, p. 27, speaking of the introduction of Christianity into Japan, quotes from an original work on the life of Xavier the following remarkable passage:—

"One thing, nevertheless, arrested the progress of the Evangelist Xavier. It was difficult to prove to the Japanese that those who during their lives had not worshipped the true God would be consigned to everlasting fire in hell. They could not reconcile this article of faith with the infinite goodness of God. If the incarnate word, said they, died for all, why should not his death profit all? If he condemns to eternal punishment all those who are not obedient to his law, why has he delayed the announcement of it to us for 1500 years?"

Creator, the Governor of all things, who is above all, and through all, and in all. And the main object of the New Testament revelation is to make known the existence of Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who gave himself a sacrifice for us, in order that he might become our Mediator and Intercession with God, and secure for us remission of our sins, and an inheritance in heaven.

Now what testimony did Jesus himself give us as to the object for which he came into the world? "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John iii. 17. "The Bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." John vi. 33. "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John vi. 51. "I came not to judge, but to save the world." John xii. 47.

John the Baptist gave similar testimony: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." John i. 29.

It may be incidentally remarked, that in the New Testament the phrase "the world" invariably means all mankind. It is also often used to contrast with the church, or with saints. But in every such case it includes all the nations of the world. In the above passages, therefore, there is no limitation.

Paul, on all occasions, preaches the very same doctrine. "While we were yet enemies Christ died for us." Rom. v. 8. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Rom. viii. 32. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Rom. xi. 32. "The Love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all." 2 Cor. v. 14. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their tres-

passes unto them." 2 Cor. v. 19. "Even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. v. 18. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15. "Who will have all men to be saved." 1 Tim. ii. 4. "Who gave himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. ii. 6. "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Heb. ii. 9. "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe." 1 Tim. iv. 10.

All these passages prove, if words of revealed truth, which thoroughly harmonize with one another, can, that the precious sacrifice of Christ covers the sins of the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, heathens and Christians. It is truly the height of madness to form an opposite doctrine on any single unsupported passage of Scripture which seems to speak a different language. No doctrine in Scripture ought to be formed on one single passage, but on the harmony of all the passages which speak of the same subject. But the Calvinists, with the strangest bias to error, base most of their doctrines on one single text, which is either obscure in its language, or, if clear, whose language they completely misunderstand; and carefully shut their eyes to every other passage in Scripture, no matter how numerous these may be, no matter how thoroughly adverse to the doctrine they had adopted.

It has often struck me that in disputes regarding the meaning of particular passages of Scripture, it would be not a bad plan to act as if each passage were a notation in algebra. Let the passages which seem to speak one language be written as numerators, and those which speak another language be written as denominators. Then strike out all which seem equally to balance each other, and see which side leaves the balance in its favour. This would

be a very much more rational plan than that followed by the Calvinists, and in every case would decide for the truth.

But there is one other testimony which, if possible, speaks still more clearly than the above, yet beautifully harmonizes with them all, and which proves that I have not misinterpreted their teaching. John says, "And he is the Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2. In this passage, John, writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares that Jesus is not only the propitiation for the sins of us Christians, but also for the sins of the whole inhabitants of the world. And if that passage stood alone, it would satisfactorily prove that to be the only true Scripture doctrine, and not that mistaught in the Confession of Faith.

For my part I cannot conceive how any one could misunderstand the clear unmistakeable teaching of all the above beautifully harmonizing passages. The Confession of Faith is evidently, in regard to these doctrines, not founded at all on the only true foundation, viz., the Word of God; but on that false philosophical teaching which Calvin adopted, to supplement what he found the Scriptures would not supply.

But the Westminster Divines in this Confession limit salvation to that infinitesimally small portion of mankind whom they term the Elect; and as their definition of that word does not mean all Christians, but only a very few indeed of professing Christians, it is allowing a very large margin in their favour if we say it will be about one in every hundred men on the face of the Earth. The assertion of the Confession in that case is, that the precious sacrifice of Christ was not for mankind, as the Scriptures assert, but only to save one in every hundred persons,

whom they style "the Elect,"—God creating the remaining 99 in every hundred for the express purpose of punishing them in Hell fire, for no fault of theirs, but simply because it was his sovereign will that such should be the case!

Well, if that be the Scripture doctrine, seeing the Scriptures are addressed to mankind, they will be sure to tell us whether that is the case or no. To be sure we have already conclusively proved, by numerous quotations from the Scriptures, that Jesus died for the whole world—for all mankind without exception; let us see whether we have not mistaken the whole inhabitants of the world for "the elect."

Paul says, "In due time Christ died for the ungodly." Rom. v. 6. That surely is not another term for the elect. Again he says, "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom. v. 8. Sinners is scarcely a term to apply to the Elect. Yet again he says, "While we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. v. 10. The title Enemies certainly does not approach to the character of the Elect. Yet again, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15. Neither is that the description of the Elect, unless the terms sinners and elect are synonymous.

It was not the Elect, then, that Jesus came to save, though that is the Confession's doctrine, which it repeatedly states, but it was sinners, enemies of God, the ungodly, all men, and the world; so that we must be right in having arrived at the conclusion that Jesus came to save all men; and the Confession of Faith must be wrong in saying he came to save the Elect only.

But let us look a little deeper still into the Scriptures. Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit, writes, "As by the offence of one Judgment came upon all men to condemnation;

even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. v. 18. This passage, then, instead of limiting the salvation of man to the elect only, asserts that *the Redemption of mankind is co-extensive with the evils of the Fall!* How beautifully, then, this further statement harmonizes with the conclusions we have already drawn; how beautifully does it harmonize with the whole Scriptures!

But Paul gives us one other glimpse of the loving God who suffers himself to be styled "Our Father," and of his dealings with mankind; for he says, "Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound." Rom. v. 28.

We thus see that if we take the revealed Word of God for our guide, and not the presumptuous heretical writings of men, we must believe that "Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." We must further believe that the benefits of Redemption are co-extensive with the evils of the Fall. And we must still further believe that the Sacrifice of Jesus more than covers the evils of the Fall; for "where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound."

But in this bigoted Presbyterian land men have been so long blinded by the unscriptural and unchristian Calvinistic Doctrines which they have been led to believe were the truth, that they cannot, or rather they dare not recognise Scripture truth even when presented to them, afraid of the bug-bear cry that they are not orthodox. Even though the true and only Scriptural Doctrine of Salvation has therefore been fully exhibited in what has preceded, and at the risk of prolixity, the subject may be looked at from another point of view.

I suppose none will deny that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind. What then does Christian Redemption imply and infer? It implies and infers that Christ the

Redeemer shall redeem, or buy back again, all mankind, who have fallen into sin and Slavery to Satan in consequence of Adam's fall. In no other way could he be the Redeemer of mankind; and if we take the trouble to examine the Scriptures, we shall find this view thoroughly borne out by them—these Scriptures representing Jesus as paying their ransom with his own blood. "Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all." Tim. ii. 6. "Gave his life a ransom for many." Matt. xx. 28. "Feed the Church of God, which he (Christ) hath purchased with his own blood." Acts xx. 28. "In whom we have redemption through his blood." Eph. i. 7. "Christ is made unto us . . . . redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30. "Christ hath redeemed us." Gal. iii. 13. "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us." Tit. ii. 14. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Rom. v. 8. "But Christ by his own blood . . . . obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. ix. 12. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John i. 7.

If, with these passages, we compare a few of those previously quoted from the Scriptures, we shall easily convince ourselves that Jesus purchased by his own precious blood all that was lost at the fall, viz., that he has purchased back or redeemed every man who lived, or shall live, on the earth. "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. v. 18. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. v. 28.

We thus see that again we arrive at the conclusion above

enunciated, that the Redemption of mankind is not only co-extensive with the evils of the Fall, but that it more than covers, and more than regains, all that was then lost.

But we must once more examine the subject from another point of view, in order to show the harmony which pervades all the revealed will of God, and to prove that the conclusions now arrived at are the sole doctrines taught on this subject in the Scriptures.

The point to which I wish to direct the attention at the present moment, as one utterly irreconcilable with the doctrines of Predestination, Election, and Redemption taught by the Confession of Faith, is "The Final Judgment."

No fact is more clearly taught in the Scriptures than this, that, at the Great Day of Judgment, every man shall be judged according to his works. If that fact be true, then it sweeps to the winds the whole doctrines of Predestination and Election as taught in the Confession of Faith. If that fact be true, then the ideas of the character of God which I have endeavoured to promulgate are the true ones, and those upheld by the Confession of Faith are false. If that fact be true, then God, besides being a loving God, will be found to be both a righteous and a just God, and will judge men according to the opportunities which each had, and not according to those which each had not.

According to the Confession, the whole world of men, excepting that infinitesimally small portion which it calls the Elect, were to be condemned without a hearing, and to be punished everlastingly in hell, because they had not the good fortune to be born in a Christian land, and could, therefore, neither be Elect nor hear of Christ. But the Gospel says something very different indeed. It assures us that all men are to be judged, Jews and Gentiles, Heathens and Christians alike; and this judgment is not to be based on their belief, or their faith, or their profession, or on their

predestination, or on their election, but upon their works. "Then shall he reward every man according to his works." Matt. xvi. 27. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. v. 10. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. xii. 14. "Every one of us shall give account of himself unto God." Rom. xiv. 12. "Every one shall bear his own burden." Gal. vi. 5. "Every one shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." 1 Cor. iii. 8. "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matt. xii. 36, 37. "And another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the Sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." Rev. xx. 12, 13.

Now, not one of these passages says that any man is to be condemned because he was not one of the Elect; and more than this, not one of these passages says that any man's judgment will be passed over because he was one of the Elect. In so far as these passages go, they do not hold out any greater chance of the Elect escaping judgment than if they were heathens and idolaters. As a harmony pervades all the Scriptures, not found in any work of man, this omission to notice that the Elect shall escape judgment cannot be fortuitous, and of itself proves that the explanation which I have given as to what Predestination and Election really mean is the correct one.

But what shall be said if at least one passage can be pointed out where the Great Head of the Church himself declares that the elect people of God, the Jews, shall not only not be regarded for any supposed election, such as that to which the Confession of Faith refers, but *shall die in their sins?* Would not such a passage prove that I have interpreted aright what the Scriptures mean by Election and Predestination? If all the Elect, and they only, are to inherit eternal life, and receive remission of their sins, as the Confession avers, then all the Jews, who are notoriously the elect of God, must receive this remission. But Jesus himself speaks another language. He holds out to the elect Jew no greater hope of remission of sins than to the rest of the world; and promises this remission to the elect Jew on the very same terms, and no other, that he promises it to the Gentile, viz., "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive remission of your sins." Thus, addressing the Jews, Jesus said, "Ye shall die in your sins. . . . I said therefore ye shall die in your sins. For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John viii. 21, 24.

But the Scriptures give us much further insight as to the principle on which God will judge the world; and, as it is a subject in which every human being is deeply interested, let us carefully study what is revealed in his Holy Word.

Paul, the great expounder of the Gospel, in the second Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, gives us some further insight as to the principles on which God will judge mankind. He tells us that in the day when God will judge the world by Jesus Christ, all men shall be judged by a just law, *for God has no respect of persons.* Mark these words. But he would have been a God who had respect of persons if he made those whom he predestinated to be elect to escape judgment altogether, because he had been pleased

to make them to be born in a Christian land. Paul also corroborates all the above quoted passages, by saying that God will judge men according to their works; and, still further, according to the opportunities which each had, and not according to those which they had not.

In that day, says Paul, God "will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, (he will give) eternal life; but unto them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, (he will send) indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But (he will give) glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God." Rom. ii. 7–11.

From this we see that Paul, by the Holy Spirit, assures us, that at the last day God will judge every man by a righteous judgment, not according to any supposed election or predestination, but according to his deeds, whether he be one of God's own people, who had God's laws to guide them, or whether he be a Gentile, who never heard either of the true God or of a Saviour.

But Paul does not stop here, he gives us some further information; and this further information in every particular corresponds with those conclusions which I have already shown are alone deducible from God's word, and are utterly opposed to the most uncharitable, unchristian conclusions of the Westminster Divines. Paul says, "As many as have sinned without Law (that is, all the heathen) are acquitted without Law; and as many as have sinned in the Law (that is, all the Jews) shall be judged by the Law," Rom. ii. 12; and he leaves it to be inferred that the Christian shall be judged by the Gospel.

But the translators of our Bible, in adopting the unchristian notion of the eternal destruction of the heathen, mistranslated the above passage, in order to make it appear that it taught the Moloch doctrine which they had adopted, even though that translation was at variance with the preceding verses. They translated the 12th verse of the 2d chapter of Romans, "As many as have sinned without Law, shall also perish without Law."

The Greek word which they translate "shall perish," is *ἀπολοῦνται*, a word which they mistook for the second future of the middle voice of the verb *απολλυω*, "I destroy." Now if this word were the future of the middle voice (and it could be no other tense of that verb), how alone could it be translated? The Greek, as I before remarked, is a very expressive language; and if this word belonged to the middle voice, it must be translated *as something which the person does to himself.* Of necessity, therefore, if it belongs to that verb, it must be translated "*they shall destroy themselves.*" But the passage in which the word occurs is not talking of what the heathen shall do to themselves, *but of what God will do to them.* The word, therefore, cannot belong to the verb *απολλυω*, "I destroy," for it cannot be the future tense of the middle voice, and there is no other tense of that verb which it could be. The translators were, no doubt, somewhat misled by the fact, that the same apparent word, and really the future tense of the middle voice of that verb, is used in a few other passages, and in these is properly enough translated "shall perish;" because in all such cases the clause bears that the persons were doing something which would have the effect of destroying themselves—as, for instance, in the well-known passage, "they that take the sword shall perish (the Greek is, 'shall destroy themselves') with the sword."

There are two other Greek verbs, to one of which the

word must therefore belong; and though its contracted form does not admit it with certainty to be referred to the one more than to the other, that is of no consequence, seeing that the meaning of both verbs in this sentence would be virtually the same. *Ἀπολοῦνται*, then, is the third person plural of the present indicative of the Passive voice of either the verb *απολουω*, "I wash, I purify," or of the verb *απολυω*, "I acquit, I dismiss, I free." In that case the word would be translated, either "are purified," or "are acquitted;" and the whole context and Paul's reasonings show that the latter is the true translation.

Why! what is Paul's whole argument? It is that "by the Law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. iii. 20. Those, therefore, who never had the Law given unto them could not sin so as to be condemned for ever. And, accordingly, Paul says, "Where no law is, there is no transgression." Rom. iv. 15. Then, lest we should misunderstand his meaning, he adds, "Until the Law, Sin was in the world; but Sin is not imputed where there is no Law." Rom. v. 13. So that, though sin was of necessity in the world from the Fall of Adam, sin was not imputed to any man, except to those only to whom the Laws of God were made known through Moses. Sin, therefore, was not imputed to the heathen, who had not the Law of God to guide them; so that when they came to be judged, provided they had been seeking for glory, honour, and immortality, as Paul explained in the previous verses, these heathens or Gentiles *were to be acquitted* for the sake of the precious sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the whole world.

There cannot be the shadow of a doubt as to this being the true Scripture doctrine.

The Westminster Divines, misled by Calvin, failed to understand Peter's words, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given

among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12. They evidently imagined that these words meant to express that only those could be saved who believed in Jesus. Grand mistake! as the numerous passages already quoted from the Scriptures prove. As Adam's transgression brought sin to mankind; so Christ's sacrifice brought salvation. Even the Christian sinner is saved, not for his own sake, but for Christ's. The heathen is a Sinner; by the passages we have quoted, we have seen that he is saved just as much by Christ's death as the Christian is. But, though saved, there is not held out to him the same glorious hopes as are held out to the Christian; for to the Christian alone, *who has found rest in Jesus*, is that higher bliss promised, that he shall reign with Christ for ever and ever; and that, instead of receiving the punishment due for the sins he committed in this life, he shall be saved the punishment of all sins, he shall receive the remission of his sins. This is the meaning of Paul's words, "Christ is made unto us righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30. This is the reason why the Christian alone is promised remission of all his sins.

But the fact is, the Westminster Divines felt they were in a fix, and, from not understanding the subject, did not know how to get out of it. They had an indistinct glimmering of the glorious truth, which the Scriptures clearly reveal, that the children of Christian Parents, dying in infancy, before they could understand the gospel or believe in Jesus, were "Elect," "children of God," "holy;" and their consciences also told them that the ancient worthies of the Old Testament were also Elect, and would enjoy the bliss of heaven, though Jesus was not revealed to them even in the most hazy manner. They therefore added the 3d clause, which shows as unmistakeably as clause can, how confused were their notions on the subject. Do not, how-

ever, let me be misunderstood. I do not challenge the truth of that 3d clause. It contains a part of the truth, but not the whole; for as the lesser is included in the greater, if all men are saved, of course that will include the children of all Christian parents, and some heathens who never heard of Christ, as that clause admits.

But the incidental notices in the Scriptures relative to the children of Christian parents, not only take it for granted that they will be saved, as all mankind will be, *but that they are to participate to the full in those higher privileges which the Christian is alone to enjoy in heaven.* "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." 1 Cor. vii. 14. "If the root be holy, so are the branches." Rom. ix. 16. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Acts xvi. 30. And Jesus himself has comforted the hearts of every bereaved Parent by declaring "It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Matt. xviii. 14.

It has thus been shown that all men will eventually be saved through the precious sacrifice of Christ. But that does not mean that they shall not be punished in the world to come for sins committed in this. All the various phrases used with special reference to the Christian—*and to him only who has found peace and rest in Jesus*—seem solely to apply to being saved from that punishment which otherwise they would endure in the world to come for the sins committed in this. No man who takes right views of religion can entertain any doubt that no man in this life can so perfectly repent of his sins as to have them entirely pardoned for Christ's sake. There would be no threatening of punishment in the next world, were not some punishment, and that graduated to the offence, to be inflicted. Neither would we have so many allusions as to some fiery trial which all

have to undergo. When Jesus made his appearance, John the Baptist said of him, "He shall baptize you with fire." Luke iii. 16. Jesus himself said, "Every one shall be salted with Fire." Mark ix. 49. Paul said, "The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is; . . . . but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." 1 Cor. iii. 13. And Peter says, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." 1 Pet. iv. 12. And to compare with these passages, take those previously quoted: "Then shall he reward every man according to his works." Matt. xvi. 27. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev. xx. 12.

My own views may be shortly stated thus. All men, after undergoing the punishment in the world to come due to their sins, will eventually be saved through the precious sacrifice of Christ. But the Jew and the Christian stand in a much more favourable position than the heathen. As the Jews were God's own people, if the Jew kept God's law, in its integrity, he will, for Christ's sake, escape the punishment of all those sins of which he repented, and for which he had atoned by offering the sacrifices prescribed by the Law. But the Christian, if he has repented of his sins, and truly put his trust in Christ as his Saviour, Intercessor, and Propitiation, will be saved from the punishment of every sin. Though his sins were once as deep as crimson, they shall be as white as snow; for the righteousness of Christ will be imputed to him,—Christ will be made to him righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,—for the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin. There can be no doubt whatever that the above is the true Scripture Doctrine.

But I am not yet done with the first clause of this Chapter. It says, "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call." These words necessarily imply that man can do nothing in this by any effort of his; that he is a mere piece of clay in the hand of the potter; that he has no free-will in the matter. Is this the doctrine of Scripture? Is this the *invitation* of the gospel? Does this agree with the "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Isa. li. 1. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John vii. 37. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts xvi. 31. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that the God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. x. 9. Hundreds of other passages to the same effect might be quoted, all showing that the Westminster divines had completely misrepresented the gospel teaching when they made that statement which is challenged. But Peter makes a statement conform to all the rest of Scripture, and to the passages above quoted, which at once disproves the teaching of the Confession, for he says: "Give diligence to make your calling and Election sure," 2 Pet. i. 10; and Paul most assuredly does not infer that the called were predestinated to be called in the sense assumed in the Confession, or that the calling was limited only to them, for he prays for the Thessalonians, "that God would count you worthy of this calling." 2 Thess. i. 11.

To return. The *being saved* applies to all men, Jews, Christians, heathens, every inhabitant of the world. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours (christians) only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (heathens).

The *being Elect* applies to all who have been chosen of God to be born as his people, Jews and Christians, good and bad alike. The *being called* is limited to the Christian, and includes all nominal Christians, good and bad, who have been called to the knowledge of the gospel. In many instances, however, in the New Testament, the words "elect," "chosen," and called," are used synonymously, as having the same general meaning. As a general rule, the New Testament applies these terms to those whom it has placed under the gospel teaching. It first calls them by the preaching of the word. If they obey the call, it styles them the "elect," or "chosen," or "called;" and it is on such alone that those further christian privileges or graces are poured which Paul describes in the sentence, "whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. viii. 30. It is to such alone that Paul addresses these comforting words: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 1. It is such alone who at the great day of Judgment escape the punishment of all sin.

CHAPTER XI.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

1. "*Those whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for any*

thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone: not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to them as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith: which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God."

2. "*Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.*"

3. "*Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, in as much as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.*"

4. "*God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless they are not justified until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.*"

5. "*God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified: and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, until*

they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance."

6. "*The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.*"

Chapters X. to XII., inclusive, ought all to be considered together, and, in fact, ought never to have been made separate chapters, but one only, as they all refer to different conditions of the same state. As taught, however, in this Confession, the doctrines of Predestination, Election, Effectual Calling, Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification, are rendered nearly unintelligible, and are mixed up with much that is not according to the Scriptures. As taught in the Scriptures, however, these varying conditions, or graces, or states, are very easily understood, and might have been taught in a single paragraph.

First, All these states refer only to those who have had the Gospel preached unto them; and, excepting the state of Election, do not refer to the Old chosen or elect people of God, the Jews, as the 6th clause falsely avers. The Justification spoken of in the New Testament is a purely Christian grace, conferred alone on the true Christian believer, and of course never could be conferred on the Jew.

Secondly, All these states of Effectual Calling, Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification, being solely confined to the Believer in Christ, cannot merely have the meaning of being saved, though it is in that light the Confession views them. We have already seen that the true and only Scripture doctrine is, that all shall be saved through the precious sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the whole world. Few, very few, however, could be "predestinated to the

adoption of children to himself by Jesus Christ," nor yet be "Elect unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," nor yet be "called to be saints," nor yet be "called out of darkness to his marvellous light." But Paul leaves us in no doubt as to the persons to whom these various states apply, for he begins at the very beginning of the series of states, and tells us all about them. He first tells us that God had fixed beforehand all to whom the Gospel was to be preached, and ordained them, or predestinated them to be born in a country, and of a people to whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ would be made known.

This, as already more fully explained, is the simple doctrine of Predestination. Thus: "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Rom. viii. 29. "Having predestinated us to the adoption of children to himself by Jesus Christ." Eph. i. 3. "In whom (Jesus) we have also obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. i. 11. Read along with these Rom. viii. 30: "Whom he did predestinate," etc. It will be seen, as has already been pointed out, that not one of these passages refers to the Jews, but is strictly and solely confined to the Christian.

Paul, therefore, having settled who are the persons whom he styles the "predestinated," tells us something regarding them. In the above quoted passage from Ephesians, he says that they were predestinated to be adopted as children to God by Jesus Christ. This, then, is the grace or state of Adoption. A state also strictly limited to the Christian, and impossible to be participated in by the Jews, or by any who have not heard of Christ, and received him as their Mediator and Intercessor.

But Paul does not stop here. He further says: "More-

over whom he did predestinate, them he also called." Rom. viii. 30. This, then, is the grace or state misnamed "Effectual Calling" in the Confession; but in the Testament simply styled "called," or "called to be saints," or "called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ," or "called the sons of God." This state also, it will be seen, is strictly limited to the Christian, and neither includes Jews nor heathens.

Paul still goes on: "Whom he called, them he also justified." Rom. viii. 30. This, then, is the state or grace of Justification; also strictly limited to the Christian who has been called to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and cannot by any Jesuitical reasonings be twisted to apply to the Jew, though the Confession, blundering on in its errors, asserts it does in its 6th clause.

Even a very shallow reasoner could see that the assertions in the 6th clause were untrue. It asserts that the Justification of believers under the Old Testament was in all respects one and the same with believers under the New. But unless they could prove that believers under the Old Testament were called to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, all such assertions are false. We know the Jew never knew of Jesus, had no idea who the promised Redeemer was; nay, even to the days of our Saviour, thought the promised Redeemer was to be a temporal king only. Nay, so blinded was the Jew as to the true knowledge of the Redeemer, that Paul says "their minds were blinded." . . . "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart." 2 Cor. iii. 15. But Paul in another passage directly contradicts the assertion in this 6th clause of the Confession, for he says: "All that believe (in Jesus) are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses." Acts xiii. 39. The Jews were therefore never called to the knowledge of Jesus, and never could

inherit the adoption of children to God, nor procure that Justification of which Paul speaks. The 6th clause must therefore be deleted, as it is contrary to the Scriptures.

But Paul still goes on telling us of a further stage or grace. He says in continuation, "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. viii. 30. But the Confession of Faith takes no notice of this state. It was not sufficiently mystical for the Westminster Divines, so they stopped at the state of Sanctification.

This simple verse, then, quoted from Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and which we have doled out in sentences, gives in intelligible language the whole of what the Westminster Divines found it requisite to enunciate in four confused chapters; and, after all, they left out the most important state of all—that of Glorification.

The whole clauses of this chapter are most presumptuous and daring, and pretend to give all the particulars as to how Justification is effected, as if such knowledge were derived from, or were founded on the Scriptures. But the 4th clause is arrant heresy, even though the Presbyterian church dignifies it with the name of orthodoxy. It avers that Christ died alone for the Elect. That statement is made to bear out what they had averred in former chapters relative to the eternal damnation of all mankind, and has already been completely answered in our Remarks on Chap. X., where we showed that there is not one single passage in the whole Scriptures where it is said that the sacrifice of Jesus was for the Elect; but that the Scriptures invariably declare that the sacrifice of Jesus was for the sins of all men, of the whole world. "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2. "Who gave himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. ii. 6. "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." John i. 29.

For the complete refutation of that statement in the Confession, we beg to refer to what we have already written in our Remarks on Chap. X.; but these few passages just quoted, suffice of themselves to prove the point at issue.

In the 5th clause it is stated that the sinner once justified can never fall. Paul, on the other hand, takes it for granted that he may fall; for he says: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift . . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, seeing that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Rom. vi. 4–6.

Now I must say that I never hesitate to follow Paul; and that I greatly prefer his expositions of Christianity to those of the Westminster Divines. Paul's doctrines and expositions I am always sure are truth; because in making known these doctrines and Truths to us Christians, he was guided immediately by the Holy Spirit. The doctrines and Expositions of the Westminster Divines, on the other hand, I am forced always to suspect of being in error; seeing that in everything they have mistaken the nature and scope of the Christian Religion, and continually jumbled it up with that old ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, which Christ by his death abolished.

CHAPTER XII.

OF ADOPTION.

1. "*All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the*

grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation."

The very first line of this clause makes a statement for which there is no authority in the Scriptures, in so far as I can detect; and the Westminster Divines have referred to no passage which bears out their statement. Paul does not combine Adoption and Justification. He does not say that those whom God justifies he also adopts; but he says, "Whom he justifies, them he also glorifies;" and when he speaks of Adoption he says, "Having predestinated us to the adoption of children to himself by Jesus Christ."

It is strange that the Westminster Divines, who are so very prolix on all occasions, should not have distinctly stated what adoption meant. One might read over the above clause again and again, and have no idea whatever on the subject. Adoption is merely the act of God adopting us as his own children. And how does he do this? First, he makes his divine son, Jesus, to assume our fleshly nature, and become a man, born of a woman; and hence our human brother. As Jesus is God's son, and takes his resurrection human body with him to heaven, God recognises him as our elder brother, and adopts all who believe in him as his children. We are therefore, by adoption, children of God; "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. viii. 17.

But the act or grace of adoption would appear to refer

primarily and specially to our corporeal bodies, our Spirits or souls being already but the breath of God, emanations from the Divinity. Paul, in reference to this view of the subject, says, "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies." Rom. viii. 25.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF SANCTIFICATION.

1. "*They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are farther sanctified really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*"
2. "*This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part: whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.*"
3. "*In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome: and so*

the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

All this prosy chapter could with great propriety be compressed into one short sentence, viz., that already quoted from Paul's writings, that those whom God calls and justifies he also sanctifies, or *makes holy*. "Ye are an holy priesthood;" "ye are an holy people;" "ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord." "Christ Jesus is of God made unto us . . . . sanctification and redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF SAVING FAITH.

1. "*The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.*"
2. "*By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and*

resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace."

3. "*This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.*"

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," said Paul (Rom. x. 17); and again, "By grace (*i.e.*, the mercy of God as shown in sending Jesus Christ) ye are saved, through faith." Eph. ii. 8. And as we live more and more in God, and advance in our Christian life, the Spirit of God enables us more and more to listen to, and believe in, God's holy word. But what a long story is made of it here!

The second clause requires an interpreter, it is so confused. Its first sentence, however, means more than is expressed. It says, "By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word." That is strictly my belief; but it is not what the Westminster Divines meant. They clearly meant, and the whole Confession proves they meant, that "the Christian believeth to be true that which *we, the Westminster Divines, say* is revealed in the word." The Confession allows no one to judge for himself what is truth or untruth. In its every clause it says, "You must believe as the truth that which *we* teach, or you are an heretic." And I have already shown that in many points—both of facts and of doctrines—the Confession teaches something very different from what the Scriptures teach.

CHAPTER XV.

OF REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.

1. "*Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.*"
2. "*By it a sinner, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God, and upon the apprehension of his mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavouring to walk with him in all the ways of his commandments.*"
3. "*Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.*"
4. "*As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.*"
5. "*Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavour to repent of his particular sins particularly.*"
6. "*As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof; upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy; so he that scandalizeth his brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his*

repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him."

What a pity such a simple subject should be rendered so obscure by verbosity.

I quite agree that the Scriptures make no such distinction in sins as the Romish Church does, viz., into venial and mortal sins. The 4th clause ought to have been explicit on this point, and said that which I have just stated. All unrighteousness is sin; all sin is hateful to God, and falls under his righteous displeasure and judgment; and it is only through Christ's sacrifice we are to be saved from its punishment, *provided we repent of it, and find acceptance in the Saviour.*

I most decidedly, however, object to the use of the word "damnation" in the 4th clause. It is a complete misapplication of the word, and besides declares an untruth. There are grades of sin, as of everything else. Even the smallest sin is displeasing to God; but it by no means follows that "there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation." It may deserve punishment, condemnation, judgment, but certainly not damnation. As God is a just God, and will apportion every punishment to the sin; so trifling sins, because they are sins, will be visited with his displeasure as well as great sins; but to say that the smallest sins deserve damnation, is certainly what neither our Reason nor the Scriptures teach.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF GOOD WORKS.

1. "*Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention.*"
2. "*These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto; that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end eternal life.*"
3. "*Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure: yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.*"
4. "*They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.*"

5. "*We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life, at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants; and because, as they are good, they proceed from his Spirit; and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.*"

6. "*Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreproveable in God's sight; but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.*"

7. "*Works done by unregenerate men, although, for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.*"

This long wordy chapter ought to have been both greatly shortened and simplified—indeed, might have been contained in one sentence.

Works are only *good works* when they are evidences of

our Faith, and are done not with the view of pleasing ourselves or of gratifying our corrupt passions, but for the alone purpose of pleasing God. Works done from pride, ostentation, vanity, etc., though they do good to others, and may even advance the cause of the Gospel, are not, in the Scriptural sense, good works to the person who does them, —for that is the essential part in the consideration of what are good works. As works, however, are the only external evidence we have that we are righteous, we find, in the allusions to the Great Day of Judgment, that it is stated that men shall be judged according to their works; not according to their belief, or their profession, or any supposed Election, or Predestination. "Then shall he reward every man according to his works." Matt. xxvi. 27. "And they were judged every man according to their works." Rev. xx. 13.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

1. "*They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.*"
2. "*This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy*

of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof."

3. "*Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.*"

To this I agree in the main, always excepting those portions which speak of Election. Those whom God has given to the Saviour shall never fail, but be saved in the great day of Judgment. They may, however, fall into manifold temptations and sins, but will repent, and finally be saved through Christ.

I am inclined, however, to believe that the case is put too strongly in the confession, for, as formerly remarked, Paul takes it for granted that some who have attained the highest excellencies as Christians *may fall;* and for such, Paul declares there is no repentance. I do not, however, think it is prudent to dip too deeply into the fine distinctions which the composers of the Confession have ventured into on this and similar subjects, seeing that in our present imperfect condition many things incidentally mentioned in the Scriptures must be imperfectly comprehended by us. Thus in 1 John iii. 9 occurs a passage which is at variance with the third clause of the above chapter: "Whosoever is born

of God doth not commit sin . . . . and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." I altogether dislike all such minute particularization as occurs everywhere in the Confession; all ought to be general.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION.

1. "*Although hypocrites, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; which hope shall never make them ashamed.*"
2. "*This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.*"
3. "*This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the*

essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness."

4. "*True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it; by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience, and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness, and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.*"

I agree generally; but the whole would have been far better expressed in one short sentence. We must judge ourselves by our works as evidences of our Faith; and if we find that our Conscience condemn us not, then may we assure ourselves, and have confidence, that we are saved

by the blood of Jesus Christ. John has beautifully expressed this holy state of assurance in the second chapter of his First Epistle.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF THE LAW OF GOD.

1. "*God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him, and all his posterity, to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.*"

In my remarks on Chap. VII., which treats of God's Covenants with man, I had occasion to enter at considerable length on the subject mentioned in this first clause, and to it must refer. The conclusions which were then arrived at, may, however, be shortly recapitulated.

When Adam was created, a stern command (not a Covenant or Testament) was given him for the purpose of testing his obedience, his self-control, and his Faith. When God created him, he made him alone of all the creatures immortal; he imparted to him some of his own immortal spirit; God himself "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Gen. ii. 7. But God entered into no Covenant or Testament with him, so far as the Scriptures inform us; and they are our only authority for all statements regarding the Covenants, Testaments, Laws, or

Commands of God. The command laid on Adam (for it was only a command) was simply this, that he must abstain from eating the fruit of one of the trees planted in the middle of the garden of Eden. If he disobeyed that command, God threatened him with death. If he broke it, he had God's assurance that by his own act he would change himself from an immortal to a mortal creature—to a being liable to death.

See the only record we have extant of this command: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 16, 17.

This command, not being a Covenant or Testament, could not be for his posterity; and also for the reason that it received its beginning and ending in Adam. It is quite true that his posterity, if he should have any, would reap the benefit of that command had he kept it; because, in that case, they would have descended from an immortal stock, and by the ordinary law of generation, they would have been immortal also. But Adam fell; he broke God's command. He yielded to the Temptation through his love for Eve. He could not see his wife sin even thus without bearing the burden and curse along with her; he ate the forbidden fruit; and so, by his own act, he incurred the penalty, and from an immortal creature at once became a creature liable to death. As, by the natural law of generation, mortal beings can only generate creatures mortal like themselves, so the whole of mankind, as being descendants of Adam, are mortal also, are liable to death. This is the plain Scripture doctrine about which theologians make such a fuss and mystery, and misunderstand, and style "original sin."

Let it be distinctly understood that the Scriptures nowhere assert that any Covenant or Testament was made with Adam. Let it be distinctly understood that the Hebrew and Greek words commonly translated "Covenant," ought to have been invariably translated "Testament," for the basis of both words refers to the death of the Testator. Let it also be distinctly understood that Paul is our sole authority for Testaments of works and Testaments of grace having been made with men, and that he pointedly asserts that the First Testament (mistranslated "Covenant") was made with Moses and not with Adam. Let it be distinctly understood that Paul, by the Holy Spirit, declares that the essence of a Testament is, that it cannot come into operation till the death of the testator; in fact, he declares that to be the meaning of the Greek word which is its radical dictionary meaning—a mortuary deed, a Testament, and not a Covenant, as it is for the most part falsely translated in the Bible.

Seeing then this is the case, are we prepared to prove that the command given to Adam was of the nature of a Testament, was a mortuary deed which could only come into operation on the death of the testator, or by the shedding of the blood of animals as a vicarious death for that of the testator, seeing that in that case the testator must have been God? Nothing of all this are we prepared to prove, or can prove. For we have not, in any part of the Scriptures, the slightest hint given that the command to Adam was either of the nature of a Covenant (or simple agreement), or of a Testament. It was simply a command or law, part of which command was to live on the fruits which grew in the garden, the other part of which was to abstain from eating the fruit of the tree which grew in the middle of the garden.

But theologians are never content to let the word of God

alone as it is delivered to us in the Scriptures, but are constantly straining to add something to it which they fall down and worship more than the truth itself. This is the case with a branch of this subject, not entered on in the Confession, but which has been so perverted by divines in recent discussions that it cannot be passed over in silence. They assert, but without the slightest foundation in Scripture, but by a perversion of words applicable to other things, that death did not exist in the world till after the fall of Adam. No passage in the Scriptures, rightly interpreted, makes such an absurd statement. This conclusion, however, is deduced from Paul's words, which have sole reference to man alone. "By man came death." 1 Cor. xv. 21. This, and all other passages which speak of the advent of death, refer so pointedly and exclusively to man, that one feels surprised it should ever have been perverted to mean, that "till the fall of man death did not exist in the world among any of the creatures." Had those who make such an assertion been familiar with Paul's writings, they would have seen that he explains very fully what his meaning was. Thus: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by the sin; *and so death passed upon all men*, for that all have sinned." Rom. v. 12. But were the ideas of these divines true, it would follow from this passage that the lower creatures can sin; for Paul's doctrine is, that sin was the cause of death in man. I never even suspected that the lower creatures were capable of sinning, or could sin; I have always regarded them as irrational creatures. Paul, besides, is not talking of the lower creatures at all, but of man alone. Paul, therefore, carefully avoids saying anything regarding the existence of death in the lower creatures. He might just as well have told us that Adam's fall was the cause of plants dying. But no such irrational doctrines are taught in the Scriptures.

God, however, has given to Rational man another book besides that of Revelation; he has given us the Book of Nature—the book of his works. When these two Books are both interpreted aright, as both proceed from the same divine author, both will be found perfectly to correspond. But fallible conceited man is very apt to read one or other of these books wrongly, when of course he finds plenty of abuse to heap on those who differ from him as to the interpretation he has put on the book which he himself pretends to understand.

Now, when we look into the Book of Nature, we find that, millions of ages before man was created, creatures existed on this earth which devoured each other, just as they do at the present day; so that death was rampant on the Earth and in the Seas.* Fish preyed on fish. Gigantic reptiles crushed at a mouthful whole flocks of animated creatures. Lions, tigers, bears, wolves, hyenas, ate living prey as they do at the present day. Last, however, was formed man. He was created originally an immortal being; and in this was unlike the creatures around him.

Even when in the Garden of Eden, however, Adam must have seen the lion, tiger, and other beasts of prey depriving other creatures of life; the birds picking up worms, reptiles, and insects; the falcons pursuing the doves and small birds; and the fishes in the waters devouring each other. Nay, he must have seen the herbivorous animals depriving of life the shrubs, herbs, and plants on which they fed. All these animals were created before man; and not one of them

* Professor Owen, in his Palæontology, says regarding this very subject: "With these conditions of life, Palæontology demonstrates that life has been enjoyed during the same countless thousands of years; and that, with life, from the beginning there has been death. The earliest testimony of the living thing, whether crust or shell, in the oldest fossiliferous rocks, is at the same time proof that it died."—P. 3.

could have existed a single day without some food; and each could only feed on that kind of food for which God had framed their teeth, claws, stomach, and their whole structure.

In the Garden of Eden itself, therefore, death must have been rampant among the lower creation, just as at the present day. Man was the marked exception. God had given him a grant of Eternal life so long as he kept his law. In so far, therefore, as man was concerned, so long as he kept from disobedience, there was no death for him. But the moment he sinned, the threatened penalty fell on him; his body became mortal—liable to death. Can theologians not see what a much stronger inducement man had to retain his then immortal condition, when he witnessed the ravages of death among the lower creation? Conceive for a moment what an impression it must have made upon him to see a lion rush upon an innocent sporting lamb, and deprive it of life with one stroke of its paw; or a hawk to stoop on a dove and lay it dead at his feet. What a speaking lesson to man—a warning to keep God's command, lest he too should become a dead piece of corruptible clay, like the lamb or dove he had seen deprived of life!

All Paul's allusions, therefore, to the advent of death into the world, refer exclusively to man's connection with death, and have no reference whatever to the connection between death and the creatures. If we were to be so foolish as to assert that Paul's words applied to the whole animal creation, simply because he uses the word "*world;*" then, as that word must be held to have the same meaning wherever it occurs, these divines are bound to hold that when Paul says Jesus died "for the sins of the whole world," he meant to include the lower animals as well as man. All such false interpretations of Scripture are to be held in abhorrence.

To bring this first clause, therefore, into harmony with the Scriptures, and make it teach Scripture Truths, it ought to read thus:

"God created man immortal; but to test his Faith and self-control, he gave Adam a command, assuring him that, if he broke it, from that moment he would become a creature liable to death. Man fell; and hence all his descendants are mortal creatures."

2. "*This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.*"

This statement is a complete perversion of the word of God, and has no foundation in the Scriptures; while, at the same time, it is the very opposite of that which this same Confession lays down as the orthodox doctrine in the 7th chapter. Which, then, is the orthodox doctrine; for both cannot be true? These two opposite attempts, therefore, to explain the command given to Adam, show how confused were the notions of the Westminster Divines regarding that command, and of the Covenants of works and of grace. In my comments on the clauses of Chapter VII., it was shown how very far the Westminster Divines had departed from the Truths of Scripture in the views and doctrines they there laid down. Let us now examine whether this second attempt to explain the matter differently is in anything more conform to what the Scriptures really teach.

Let us use our Reason for a moment, and endeavour to

ascertain what was really said or commanded to Adam; and whether it was, in its nature, fitted to be a rule of righteousness to others, or whether it was not, by its very nature, limited to him alone, and could apply to none other. We have but one narrative as to what occurred; so let us turn to Genesis ii. 16, 17: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every Tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Now, if we allow ourselves to be guided by Reason, and not by old metaphysico-theological prejudices, we shall at once see that this was a command which could only be kept by two persons of the human race—viz., Adam and Eve. *First*, it was limited to those who were to live on the fruits in the garden of Eden. *Secondly*, it could only be broken by those who could get access to the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil which grew in the midst of that garden. No man, therefore, could keep that command but Adam; no man but he could break it. It therefore never could be intended for any other member of the human race; it never could be continued as a "Law after his fall to be a perfect rule of righteousness." The moment Adam broke that command of God, the command itself came to a natural end, and died. Adam, for breaking that command, received in himself the punishment, or sentence, due for his sin; he became a creature liable to death; and as he was expelled from the garden of Eden, no opportunity was ever thereafter allowed him of either eating the ordinary fruits, which one part of that command permitted him to eat, nor of eating the fruit of the tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, which the other part of that command forbade him even to touch.

It is therefore clear as noon-day that the command given

to Adam never could apply to any of the human race, but to himself and Eve; none of the human race, but they, were ever permitted to eat any fruits in Eden, and never could have even seen the Forbidden fruit. The command, therefore, to Adam never could continue in force after Adam's expulsion from the Garden; never could continue as "a perfect rule of righteousness," as this clause of the Confession falsely asserts it did.

It is indeed surprising how any other conclusion could be arrived at. It only proves more and more how far the Westminster Divines, and all their followers, have allowed themselves to be blinded to the Truths of Scripture by viewing them through the dim, hazy, metaphysical, or false philosophical theories which prevailed so much from the third Century, many of which were adopted by Calvin, and have not been thrown off even in our own day.

But the above clause of the Confession says that this Command to Adam was the same law which "was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in Ten Commandments." I consider I have sufficiently shown the falsity of that statement in what has already been said, and still more in my comments on Chap. VII. Instead, therefore, of repeating here all I stated there regarding that Covenant or Testament which God made with the Children of Israel at Sinai, I shall shortly look at the subject from another point of view.

If any command or Law had been given to Adam to rule his life, or be a rule of righteousness to his descendants, the Old Testament would have given us some intimation thereof; and Paul, or some of the writers in the New Testament, would undoubtedly allude to it. None such is found. But Paul does tell us something; and all that Paul writes is well worthy of our deepest study. "Until the Law, says Paul, Sin was in the world; but Sin is not imputed where there is no Law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam

to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Rom. v. 13, 14.

Now what is it which Paul says here? He clearly declares that till The Law was given to Moses there was no Law. He clearly declares that all those who died in the world from the days of Adam up to the days of Moses were under no law, and did not sin after the likeness of Adam's sin. And the conclusion from all that is, that the command given to Adam never remained as a rule of righteousness. And a still further conclusion from Paul's statement is, that the Law which was given to Moses must be a very different Law from the command given to Adam. Paul thus authenticates the conclusions we had previously arrived at, that the command given to Adam died with his breaking it; was for him alone; and being limited in its operation to the garden of Eden, never could extend to any of the human race.

So far as the Scriptures teach us, God left man to walk by what we call the light of nature from the days of Adam to those of Abraham. It is most probable that to Adam was originally communicated some knowledge of God, and of his will; and that he was taught something of his duty to God; and the obscure intimations in the Scriptures as to sacrifices, and occasional revelations to certain men (Cain, Noah, etc.), render this probability almost a certainty. But what these were, we are nowhere told. It is not till we come to the days of Abraham that we find God freely revealing himself to men.

With Abraham, however, God entered into a Covenant. This Covenant, or Testament rather, was made with Abraham for his descendants throughout all their generations; and the rite of circumcision was established as the token of that Covenant. Gen. xvii. 7 and 11: "And I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed

after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. . . . And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the Covenant betwixt me and you."

It was this Covenant which was renewed with Moses and with the Children of Israel at Sinai: "Which Covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting Covenant." Ps. cv. 10. It was therefore a Covenant solely for the descendants of Abraham, and not for the human race.

Now that Covenant, when confirmed to Moses, was committed to writing, and the words of that Covenant were the Ten Commandments. "Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a Covenant with thee and with Israel. . . . And he wrote upon the Tables the words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments." Exod. xxxiv. 27, 28.

Nowhere in the Scriptures is that Covenant named "the Moral Law," as the Ten Commandments are termed by the Westminster Divines. But Paul styles that Covenant or Testament the "First Covenant," the "First Testament," and "The Law;" and assures us that it was abolished and done away by the New Covenant, or rather New Testament, or Covenant of Grace, which Christ introduced by his death. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of Commandments contained in ordinances." Eph. ii. 15. "Now we are delivered from The Law, that being dead wherein we were held." Rom. vii. 6.

Such, then, being the Scripture Truths, the second clause also of this chapter of the Confession must be altered to something like the following:

"In process of time God chose one Family, with whom he entered into a solemn Covenant, or Testament, giving them

the Rite of Circumcision as the token of that Covenant. When they increased to a Nation, God renewed that Covenant with them under their leader Moses, and wrote the words of that Covenant, the Ten Commandments, on Two Tables of Stone. That Covenant is now known as the First Covenant, or Covenant of works."

3. "*Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances; partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.*"
4. "*To them also, as a body politick, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.*"
5. "*The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God, the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.*"

I shall consider these clauses together, because they are all founded on a misunderstanding of the Scriptures; in fact, these clauses are just asserting and doing what the old judaizing converts at Antioch endeavoured to do to the early Gentile Christians, viz., endeavour to force upon them the Jewish or Mosaical Laws. It is just because this un-

scriptural union of the two religions has been received as the accepted Scottish Religious creed that we find so much Pharisaism prevailing at the present day, to the exclusion of vital Christianity; and till men recognise the true Christian liberty of the Gospel, and reject all such teaching as a "subverting of their souls," as it was properly termed by the Apostles, we cannot expect to find that high moral tone which pure practical Christianity alone enforces. The whole of the Confession shows—but of course it is more pointedly brought out in these clauses—that the Westminster Divines could not distinguish between the Old Testament, which is the ministration of death, and the New Testament, which giveth life.

The ancient Jews, up to the days of our Saviour, as well as our Saviour himself and his apostles, never divided the Mosaical Laws into Moral, ceremonial, and judicial divisions. This was a refinement left for the theological hair-splitters. Paul, in his very free comments on the Mosaical Laws, does not even in one passage allude to any such divisions, and certainly does not recognise any. He constantly speaks of the Law as one and indivisible; and I have been unable to find a single passage where the Ten Commandments are styled "the Moral Law." These Commandments never could have been styled a moral law by Paul, because the very chiefest of them, viz., the Fourth, is a purely ceremonial Law, and is classed by Paul as such along with meats and drinks, and feasts and holidays.

But the above clauses not only assert that such a division of the Mosaical Laws did exist, and was acted on, but they also assert that the Ten Commandments, which they misname the Moral Law, are still binding on all Christians, though they admit that the rest of the Mosaical Laws are abolished.

Let us, then, see what the Scriptures say on the subject;

for our Faith must be based on the revealed word of God, not on false metaphysical conclusions, or the wayward fancies of theologians.

I shall therefore proceed to prove that the Ten Commandments, falsely called the Moral Law, were the very words of the First Covenant, or Testament, which was done away, and was abolished by the death of Jesus. Lest it should be forgotten, however, I reiterate what has already been fully proved, that the words "Covenant" and "Testament" are synonymous (see p. 99). Though translated in our Bibles by these two words, it is the same Greek word in both cases; as it is also in the Hebrew. I therefore invariably use the words as synonymous, and it will save repetition if I just quote the words as they occur in our English translation, not as they ought to have been.

To begin at the beginning, we have first to ascertain with whom the First Covenant was made; and as Paul is our sole authority for all the Statements relative to First and Second Covenants, we must turn to his writings to see what he states regarding them.

Pauls says, "If that First Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the Second." Then, quoting Jeremiah, he says, "The days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." Heb. viii. 9. And again: "In that he saith, A New Covenant, he hath made the First Old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Heb. viii. 13. "Then verily the First Covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary; for there was a Tabernacle made," etc. Heb. ix. 1. And yet again: "Whereupon neither the First Testament was dedi-

cated without blood; for when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined unto you." Heb. ix. 18–20.

These quotations, then, fix that the First Covenant was made with Moses and the Children of Israel. Let us then turn back to the historical narrative which gives all the particulars relative to that Covenant, and we shall easily convince ourselves that the words of this Covenant were the Ten Commandments.

"And the Lord said unto Moses: Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a Covenant with thee and with Israel. . . . . And he wrote upon the Tables the words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments." Exod. xxxiv. 27, 28. And yet again: "The Lord our God made a Covenant with us in Horeb . . . . saying: I am the Lord thy God," etc. (here follow the Ten Commandments). "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and he added no more: And he wrote them in two Tables of Stone, and delivered them unto me." Deut. v. 2–22. "So I turned and came down from the Mount, and the Mount burned with fire; and the two Tables of the Covenant were in my two hands." Deut. ix. 15. The ark also which Moses made to hold these Two Tables was styled, "The Ark of the Covenant."

These quotations, therefore, prove beyond the possibility of cavil that the very words of the First Covenant were the Ten Commandments—that the Ten Commandments were, in fact, the Covenant itself. I have now, therefore, only to show that instead of these Ten Commandments, this

First Covenant, being made binding on all men for ever, it was this very Covenant, these very Ten Commandments, this so-called moral law, which was abolished and done away by the death of Jesus bringing in the Second or New Covenant.

"In that he saith, A New Covenant, he hath made the First old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Heb. viii. 13. "He taketh away the First, that he may establish the Second." Heb. x. 9. "There is verily a disannulling of the Commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." Heb. vii. 18. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments in ordinances." Eph. ii. 15. "These are the two Covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage." Gal. iv. 24. "If the ministration of death written and engraven in stones was glorious . . . . which ministration was to be done away . . . . if the ministration of condemnation be glory . . . . if that which is done away was glorious." 2 Cor. iii. 7–11. "The children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." 2 Cor. iii. 13. "Now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held." Rom. vii. 6. "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14.

From these numerous quotations from the Scriptures, which speak clearly and unequivocally, we see that instead of these Ten Commandments being intended by God to be continued as a moral law on all men in all time, they were abolished altogether, made as if they had never been, by the death of Jesus. Just observe how very differently Paul speaks of these Commandments from what the Confession of Faith does; and be it remembered that all Paul's writings were under the immediate directions of the Holy

Spirit; whereas everything written in the Confession of Faith is but the work of fallible, prejudiced men, who in many cases could not comprehend the meaning of the Scriptures. First, Paul terms these Ten Commandments, that first Covenant, a "ministration of death;" next, he styles it, "a ministration of condemnation;" then he calls it an "enmity;" and lastly, a "yoke of bondage;" and ends with warning the Christian in these words: "Be not entangled again in this yoke of bondage." Gal. v. 1. But Peter speaks of it in the very same strain: "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Acts xv. 10.

The above clauses of the Confession, then, are thus proved to be teaching as doctrine that which is directly opposed to the plain teaching of Scripture. These clauses must, therefore, be deleted from the Confession, if it pretends that the doctrines which it teaches are founded on the Sacred Scriptures.

The fact is, the Westminster Divines did not know what they were talking about when they averred that the Ten Commandments, which they called the Moral Law, were to remain binding in all ages on Christians, when the rest of the Mosaical Laws were abolished. The Ten Commandments being the words of the First Covenant, were merely the Epitome of the whole Mosaical code; and the whole Mosaical code of laws is but the application and expansion of these various commandments to the peculiar worship, and civil life and polity, of the Jewish nation.

These three clauses of the Confession, therefore, ought merely to have said:

"4. That First Covenant was abolished and done away on Jesus Christ, the Son of God, bringing in the New Covenant, or New Testament, or Covenant of Grace, by

the sacrifice of himself. This New Covenant or Testament is alone binding now on the Christian."

6. "*Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.*"

7. "*Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God revealed in the law requireth to be done.*"

These clauses must be altered, and made to correspond with the explanations already given relative to the previous clauses. We are not Jews, but Gentile Christians. The Old Testament, consequently, is to us Gentiles for a very different purpose than the New Testament. The fact is, that a man could be a perfect Christian without knowing a word of the Old Testament. All the Laws and Ordinances which we Gentile Christians require to know, and to obey, are contained in the New Testament alone; and the great bane in our day, in this Presbyterian land, is, that to a very great extent we have engrafted Judaism on Christianity, so that, instead of our Religion being Christianity, it is Christiano-Judaism. We have thus done that very thing which Paul and all the apostles were so anxious to prevent, and which the apostles at their great meeting at Jerusalem declared to be "a subverting of the souls" of the Gentile Christians. Our leaders shut their eyes to the fact that the Apostles at Jerusalem declared that, "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing (as the Laws of Moses), save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication." Acts xxi. 25. We cannot too constantly remember that the words of Truth declare that the Law "written and engraven on Stones" was a "ministration of death," a "ministration of condemnation," 2 Cor. iii. 7,—a "yoke of bondage;" but that "life and immortality were brought to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. i. 10.

CHAPTER XX.

OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

1. "*The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love, and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law; but under the new testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish Church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.*"

This, as stated, is nearly unintelligible; and, besides, it is for the most part utterly false; and shows most clearly how very confused were the ideas of the Westminster Divines as to what Christianity really was. For instance, what shall we say of the assertion here made, that "all the liberties which Christ purchased for believers under the gospel were common also to believers under the Law"? Here is Judaism with a vengeance! Here is a denying of the whole benefits which Christ purchased for believers with his precious blood! If such had been the case, then Christ had not required to

have come in the flesh. If such were the case, what does Paul mean by calling the Law "a ministration of death" —"a yoke of bondage"? "Stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage." Gal. v. 1. Does that look at all as if Paul thought that the Law gave any freedom? Did Peter or the other apostles consider that the Law gave any freedom, when, in the Public Assembly at Jerusalem, Peter called out, "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear"? Peter, then, as well as Paul, thought that the Law gave no liberty whatever; and they were surely much better judges on such a subject than the Westminster Divines, seeing that they themselves had lived under the Law, and knew practically what it really was.

No wonder that the Westminster Divines understood not wherein Christian liberty consisted, when they jumbled together, throughout the whole system of Theology which they taught, the Jewish and Christian dispensations. Yet these two Systems are wholly and irreconcilably different.

For instance:—The Jew was commanded to take an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth;—but the Christian is taught, if smitten on the one cheek, to turn the other also. The Jew was commanded to hate his Enemies;—the Christian is commanded to love his enemies, and to pray even for his persecutors and murderers. The Jews were commanded to observe a great many days as holy, some as fasts, and some as feasts;—the Christian is left free in this respect altogether, as every day ought to be spent as a day consecrated to God, the Christian never forgetting that he is a redeemed and immortal creature, and is not his own. The Jew was to tolerate no religion but his own;—the Christian is to tolerate the private religious opinions of all men, and to leave the judgment of the conscience to God.

The Jews had one Tribe who alone could be priests; even the very vicegerent of God, their temporal sovereign, could not take on him the office of a priest;—every Christian, on the other hand, is in his own person one of a royal priesthood, and can, if he chooses, perform all the functions of a Christian minister. The Jew had but one holy place where God was more immediately present, and in which religious worship alone was offered, and where alone the sacrifices could be made;—but to the Christian every place is equally holy; for our God is not confined to Témples made with hands; and wherever two or three meet together in the name of Christ, there may all the ordinances of our Christian faith be dispensed. Every male Jew had thrice every year to leave his avocations, and present himself before God in the Temple at Jerusalem;—but the Christian can present himself to God in his own secret chamber whenever he bows the knee in worship. The Jew had to atone for every sin by offering costly sacrifices of oxen, sheep, or other animals;—the Christian has only to offer the sacrifice of a penitent and contrite heart, and he is accepted for the sake of that one sacrifice for the sins of the world, Jesus Christ. The Jews were not permitted to eat all kinds of food, but only certain kinds of beasts, and of birds, and of fishes, which were hence called clean; and even of these clean beasts they were not allowed to eat the fat; nay, even their ordinary food at certain seasons could only be prepared in one way, when they were limited to the use of unleavened bread;—to the Christian there is no limitation as to what he may eat or drink; the liberty given to Noah is his liberty: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you." If a Jew touched a dead body, or what was called an unclean person or animal, he could not appear in the congregation, nor enter the Temple; neither was he allowed to eat until evening, when he had to change his

clothes and wash himself.—No such ceremonial restrictions are imposed on the Christian.

These, then, are a few of the marked differences between the Jewish and the Christian Dispensations. The Jew had no liberty whatever. He was in a state of constant bondage. And no doubt Paul spoke feelingly when he wrote to the Christians of Galatia, "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

2. "*God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.*"

This clause expresses the true liberty of the gospel,—the very liberty which the Gospel brings and teaches. But this clause in the Confession is a delusion and a snare. The Westminster Divines never intended it should be acted on, and the present Presbyterian Church rulers have not the most distant idea of ever allowing any one of their number to act upon it. This clause holds out a liberty and freedom with one hand, while it carefully withholds with the other, as will be seen when we come to clause 4; aye, and so withholds it as to show every one that, were he to attempt to make use of that liberty which it here proclaims every man has, if the clergy had the power, they would torture, hang, behead, burn every one who dared to differ from them in either doctrine, practice, or discipline.

Just look at the practice of the Church Courts of the present day, and see how far they allow any liberty either to the clergy or the people. One of their very latest acts was to put on trial, with the view of deposing him from his charge, if they dared do such a thing, one of the most intelligent and liberal-minded ministers of their church, because he allowed his congregation to kneel when they prayed; and to stand, and thus assume a devotional attitude, when they chaunted their Maker's Praise!!!

Such is the blessed liberty of the Gospel as declared by this Confession, and expounded and put in practice by the Church whose Confession of Faith this is!

3. "*They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, do practise any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*"

I don't see the use of this clause at all, and the application of the words of Scripture is as comical a misquotation as it is possible to conceive.

4. "*And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of*

such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate."

There is liberty! There is Popery with a vengeance! This too in a Protestant Confession! A clause like the above would be a foul blot in any Creed professing to be Christian; how much more in a Protestant Confession of Faith! Christian Liberty! why, this takes away the very name. Liberty of thought? Liberty of speech? Liberty of Action? Nothing of the kind! Nothing is to be allowed but what is strictly conform to the bigoted views of the then dominant party of the Church. Nay, the Christian is not even to be permitted to think differently from what that dominant Church Party thinks, else, if he dare to utter his thoughts, or publish them, he is to be punished with all the powers of the Church; nay more, they are even to invoke the aid of the civil magistrate to cut off the bold and free Christian from the Earth. Truly an excellent way of arriving at the truth—to prevent all discussion. Truly an excellent way of procuring that bugbear "uniformity" in the church—by forcibly preventing all possibility of dissent.

Romanism never asked more than this. But then Romanism was consistent. Romanism allowed no one to think for himself. The Church—that is, the priests—thought

for him. Romanism allowed no one to read and interpret Scripture for himself. The Church told him what the Scriptures said, and put upon that her own interpretation. The Romish Church allowed no liberty of thought, word, or action, and consistently punished with all the powers of the ecclesiastical and civil powers every one who dared to make use of the liberty for which Christ laid down his life. The Romish Church was therefore consistent, though it was a consistency in error. But the Protestant Church was without excuse. It threw the gates of the Bible open to all. It invited every one to read, and interpret, and judge for himself; recommending him to use the Reason with which God had endowed him, to consult the original tongues in which the Scriptures were written, and to make Scripture interpret Scripture.

But it was power, *and not truth*, that the Reformers and the Westminster Divines coveted. They could not see one Church with power, without desiring to procure or retain for themselves as much as the civil power would yield; and not only does this clause most unmistakeably show that they were as little inclined as the Church of Rome to yield liberty of conscience to any one; but their bloody deeds attest to this day that, had they the power, the ecclesiastical Rulers of the Protestant Church would bring this insulting, savage, bloody, unchristian, heathen clause into active operation.

It is truly melancholy to reflect how very far our early Reformers and these Westminster Divines were from understanding wherein lay true Christian liberty—"Liberty of Conscience." Every true reader of History now sees this. Every earnest Christian, every man who is anxious to see his species advance in Religion, in Morality, in Truth, in Civilisation, sees the necessity for "Liberty of Conscience" being proclaimed as the indefeasible right of every human

creature. Paul clearly saw this; and he asks a question which is quite pertinent at the present day, when we find men trying to force their opinions on others: "Why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?" 1 Cor. x. 29.

Such being my views, I look with horror and detestation on this clause. It is not Christianity. It is savage, bloody heathenism.

Besides, this clause confounds two things as distinct from each other as fire and water. It confounds the duties of Christians *as members of a civil community*, with their duties *as members of a church.*

By the New Testament, by which *alone* Christians are to be guided, *no power is given to any Christian Church to punish by pains and penalties any member of that church for any crime whatever.* He was merely to be remonstrated with; if he refused to repent, he was to be rebuked; or if his sin or crime should be great, he was to be expelled from that church or congregation. The New Testament is so clear on this head that I might be spared the trouble of quotation. But as others may be as wilfully blind as the Westminster Divines, it is as well to show the authority of Scripture for the only mode in which it authorizes the Church to deal with a sinning or criminal member.

First let us hear what The Head of the Church himself says as to this very point: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear thee, tell it unto the Church. *But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*" Matt. xviii. 15–17.

That certainly does not give any authority to call in the

aids of the civil power to punish the offender, either by imprisonment, or fine, or torture, or death. He was simply to be expelled from the Communion of the Saints—from the visible church—and was to be treated as if a stranger, and heathen, and sinner; that is to say, he was to be treated as a person for whose conversion they were to pray!

Let us next see whether the Apostles did not teach the very same as their Great Master on this point. In the Church at Corinth the laws of morality became so relaxed, that one of the members married his father's widow. Paul was highly offended at this; and what were his directions? "Therefore, put away from yourselves that wicked person." And in commenting on it, as to the treatment all offenders should receive from the Church, he says, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators. . . . . But now I have written unto you *not to keep company*, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, *with such an one no not to eat*." 1 Cor. v. 9–11. Again Paul says, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." 2 Thess. iii. 6. And yet again, "If any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and *have no company with him*, that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." 2 Thess. iii. 15.

But besides these casual notices, Paul left certain instructions both with Timothy and with Titus how they were to treat offenders in the Churches over which they had the oversight. Let us see, then, whether he directs these men to call in any extraneous aid, or whether he does not limit himself to our Lord's own instructions. If a minister of the gospel should commit some sin, Paul's

directions to Timothy regarding such an one are, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." 1 Tim. v. 20. And with regard to others—false teachers, sinners, etc.—the sole directions are, "From such withdraw thyself." 1 Tim. vi. 5. To Titus his directions were equally explicit. "A man that is an heretick, after the first and second admonition, reject." Titus iii. 10. The word "reject" simply means, "cast out of your communion."

Thus we see that by the New Testament no church has any power to inflict *civil* censures, or ask the aids of the civil power to punish offenders in any way whatever. *The Powers of the Church, by the New Testament, are merely persuasive;* and if these fail, the church has no further power to do aught than to expel the offending member—to withdraw from communion with him.

During their lives, the apostles of our Lord had additional powers to those mentioned above—miraculous powers—by which they could inflict serious bodily disease, nay, even temporal death itself on the offending member. We have instances of these miraculous powers recorded in the Scriptures. *First*, the infliction of bodily disease, in the cases of the incestuous person at Corinth, and in that of Elymas the sorcerer; and *secondly*, the infliction of temporal death in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira. These miraculous powers were confined to the primitive Christians, or, rather, to the apostles alone, and were conferred on them for a special purpose, and died with them; so that no inference can be drawn from such a precedent as to the church now possessing any such powers. Besides, if the Church, or its superior officers, now possessed such a power, would it not by itself demonstrate that the church ought never to call in the aid of a civil power, when she had the supreme power in her own hands, and could punish her offending members by inflicting on them bodily diseases, or even death itself?

We know, however, that the Church has no such miraculous powers, and never had since the death of the Apostles; and we have also seen that her whole powers are limited by the gospel to powers of persuasion.

Very different indeed from the powers given to the Church, are the Powers given to the Civil Rulers by the New Testament. Civil Rulers, be it remembered, are appointed for the good of the Community, which may consist of nations and peoples of different languages, different habits, and different religious beliefs. Civil Rulers must, therefore, enact such laws as shall best advance the interests and prosperity of all classes of the people, and must have power to enforce obedience to these laws by the sword, or in any other way they may appoint.

Any one may, therefore, resist the Ecclesiastical Power, or the dominant Church party, in any country, provided they do so conscientiously, and don't care running the risk of being expelled from the communion of that Church. But, on the other hand, every one is bound at all hazards to obey the Civil Powers, whose laws were made for the good of the whole community. Nay more; if any Church, or any Congregation, shall so act towards one of its members as to injure him in his civil position, it is clearly lawful for that member to appeal to the Civil Courts, whose powers, according to the New Testament, are clearly above those of the Church, seeing that every member of the Christian Church is bound by the Word of God to give obedience to the Civil Magistrate. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? Do that which is

good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain." Rom. xiii. 1–5. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates." Titus iii. 1.

Now I beg to call especial attention to the fact, that in the above quoted Passage the civil power is called "The higher Powers," higher than any Church power; and we have a notable practical example of this recorded in the New Testament. When a violent Church Party in his day tried to condemn Paul, and would have put him to death, had they the power, what did Paul do? He appealed to the Civil Ruler, he appealed to Cæsar. "Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: no man may deliver me unto thee. I appeal unto Cæsar." Acts xxv. 10, 11.

In our own day we have seen a notable example of an Ecclesiastical body endeavouring, in this Protestant land, to assert her "Spiritual independence," as she termed it; *i.e.*, asserting and endeavouring to prove that her acts were above the interference of the Civil Courts; and that body even succeeded in getting other ecclesiastical bodies to support them in their arrogant claims. Not finding any support in the New Testament for such claims, casual passages in the Old were given a perverted exposition, as if they supported such unscriptural claims. The Old Testament, however, though quite inapplicable to Christian polity, condemns most thoroughly all such arrogant pretensions; and yet no church now can claim anything like the status of the Old Jewish Church, nor any set of ministers the status of the Jewish Priests. Yet in everything that old Jewish Church was subordinate to the Civil Power!

To begin at the beginning, the High Priest Aaron was subordinate to the Civil Ruler Moses. It was not the

Priests, or the Ecclesiastical Power, who arranged all the services of the Sanctuary, but it was the Civil Ruler! And this continued throughout the whole continuance of the Jewish Church. Thus Moses, the Civil Ruler, settled the whole Ritual and forms of worship in his day. It was David, and not the High Priest, who altered and settled the whole ritual and services in his Day. When Solomon built the Temple at Jerusalem, it was he, the Civil Ruler, and not the Priests, who made all the arrangements, and settled all the ritual and service for the public worship of God. In fact these Civil Rulers set up and put down even the High Priests at their pleasure, during the whole continuance of the Jewish Church. Moses appointed Aaron. Saul slew Ahimelech, and appointed Zadock in his room. David removed him and appointed Abiathar. While Solomon removed Abiathar and appointed Zadock. History informs us that the same happened during the whole Jewish Dispensation down to its very close. In everything, therefore, the ancient Jewish Church was subject to the Civil Ruler —to the Civil Power; and so ought every church to be in all ages; and so every church will be which professes truly to take the word of God as the basis of its laws.

To sum up, the Church (if it acknowledges the Scriptures as its authority for its doctrines and practices) has merely power to expel from the church, or from its communion, any offending member, provided his sin be sufficiently great to merit such a punishment. Pains and penalties can only be inflicted by the Civil Ruler, for a breach of the Civil laws; and those laws should never extend to, nor take cognizance of, matters of private judgment, or of religious doctrines and practice, unless these specially interfere with the civil interests of the Community. To this ex tent must the above 4th clause be altered. In no other way

can it agree with the only laws binding on Christians—those of the New Testament.

Under the Old Testament the civil law was also the Ecclesiastical law, for they were one and indivisible, and for the special reason that the King of the Jews was also the God and Creator of all things, the *temporal* as well as the *eternal King* of Israel. The temporal King of the Jews was, in fact, only God's vicegerent. This fact seems to have been quite unknown to the Westminster Divines.

But the Laws of God were never intended exclusively for Protestants; nor of Protestants only for that small sect called Presbyterians. If the Fourth clause, therefore, as it appears in the Confession, were true, then it fully justifies all the cruelties which the Popish Church, through its "Inquisition," has ever perpetrated. All that the Romish Church has ever done in the way of putting down what she called heresy, was only carrying out the doctrines laid down in this clause, as the will of God. Nay more, all the bloody persecutions to which our Covenanting forefathers in Scotland were subjected in their day, are fully justified by this clause; and should Roman Catholicism, or Episcopacy, or Mahommedanism ever get the upper hand in Scotland, and choose to put down by the sword all which they call heresy, the Presbyterians of Scotland could not justly complain, as they, in this their own confession of faith, declare that such modes of putting down heresy is conform to the will of God!

Looked at, then, from this point of view, it is at once seen that the doctrine taught in this fourth clause of the Confession cannot be true. Indeed, the falsity or truth of such a dogma or doctrine is often best seen by endeavouring to ascertain how it would apply to ourselves were our present position altered, and we made the persecuted, instead of the dominant party. This consideration, therefore, even

independent of the full proof which has been led that no such persecuting powers are given by the gospel to any Church, proves that the conclusions at which I had arrived are those alone conform to the word of God. These considerations and proofs further demonstrate that I was correct in asserting that it was power, and not truth, which the early leaders of the Presbyterian Church sought; and that they wished to convince an ignorant multitude that the Scriptures freely gave them those arrogant persecuting powers which they claimed. They further show how lamentably prone men are to misinterpret the word of God, when that misinterpretation suits their own lust for power; and thus willingly blind themselves with the belief that they are doing God's will, while they are all the time teaching for Doctrines the Commands of men, and following their own perverted wills, and their lust for power.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH-DAY.

1. "*The light of nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is good, and doeth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or*

the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy scripture."

With this clause I cordially agree; and wish that all the clauses in the Confession had been drawn up as unobjectionably, and as closely conformed to the Scriptures.

2. "*Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to him alone: not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and, since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.*"

There is no authority in the Scriptures, so far as I can make out, for saying that worship is to be paid either to the Son or to the Holy Ghost; and in my remarks on Chapters II. and VIII. it was shown that the Son and the Holy Ghost are not parts or Persons of the one only true God whom we are alone to worship. "To us there is but one God the Father." 1 Cor. viii. 6. And Christ himself, in that sublime prayer which he addressed to God the Father before he suffered, said: "This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the Only True God." John xvii. 3. Besides, see the absurdity which this clause teaches. It commands worship to be given to the Son, yet concludes by saying that worship can only be given through the Mediator Jesus Christ. That is to say, it declares that when we address worship to the Son, we are to employ the mediation of the very person whom we are worshipping.

Jesus Christ himself, Paul, and all the writers in the New Testament, on the other hand, limit religious worship to God the Father alone; and carefully point out that that

worship is only acceptable when made in the name, and through the mediation, of Jesus Christ. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." John xiv. 6. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. ii. 5. "Giving thanks always, for all things, unto the God and Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. v. 20. "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the God and Father by him." Col. iii. 17. "Ye also are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter ii. 5.

But the latter part of the clause makes a curious blunder. It says that "since the Fall," religious worship is not to be given "without a Mediator." I cannot even presume to guess in what part of the Scriptures is to be found the authority for this statement; and a very little consideration will show its absurdity. If we take the Mosaic Account, speaking in a rough way we may say that about six thousand years has elapsed since the Fall. But a Mediator has only been revealed for less than a third of that period. Up till the death of Christ, then, it is quite impossible that religious worship could have been given through a mediator. We can only give religious worship through a Mediator when we know of that Mediator. As no Mediator was revealed to man for at least four thousand years after the Fall of Adam, during all that period it was absolutely impossible that religious worship could have been given through a Mediator. No quibbles about words can get over this. Even though we granted that the Jewish rites all pointed to a Mediator, it was a Mediator to come, not one revealed; not one through whom religious worship could be given; and, till the Mosaic law, there was not even the most distant, hazy hint that a Mediator was ever to appear.

The whole of the second clause must, therefore, be altered

thus: "Religious Worship is to be given to God the Father through the alone Mediator Jesus the Christ; and no worship or adoration of any kind is to be given to angels or to saints, or to the spirits of departed men or women, or to any creature or thing whatever."

It is right to state that no worship of any kind is to be given to any angel, however high, or to the Spirit of any man or woman, however holy their lives may have been, nor however nearly related they may have been in the flesh to the Saviour of the world. The Confession on far less important points is profusely prolix, and where its verbosity would have been better bestowed it is reticent to a degree. Here it might with propriety have mentioned the reason why no worship should be given to any created being. Every creature, whether angel, or man, or beast, is a definite being. It can only be in one single very limited spot at one time. It is not, like a God, omnipresent. The Spirit of a man or woman, supposing it was allowed by God to leave Hades, and visit this earth, could only appear in one place at one time. If she, for instance, whom the Romish Church styles the Virgin Mary, were allowed by God to be present in Rome to hear the Pope's prayer, she could not even be present at the same time in the adjoining room, where his attendants were praying; far less could her spirit be present to hear the prayers directed to her from every church in Rome. Common sense tells us, therefore, that it would be folly to address prayers to a creature whom we never could be sure would hear us; and who, even though she could hear us, could not have access to God to present our prayers, or to intercede for us; seeing we have the sure word of God to tell us that no Spirit or soul of man will be in heaven till after the Great Day of Judgment. A thousand years, and more, after David died, the Apostle Peter, speaking of his soul, said, "David is not

ascended into the heavens," Acts ii. 34; and Jesus himself bore testimony to the same great fact that no man was yet in Heaven by saying, "No man hath ascended up to heaven." John iii. 13. This particular subject, however, will be fully entered upon afterwards, when we speak of the condition of men after death.

3. "*Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men; and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue.*"

This clause expresses very closely my belief, as explained in my remarks on the previous clause of the Confession, and is certainly quite contradictory of that clause. One word alone must be altered. It says we are to pray by the help of "*his* Spirit;" the Scriptures invariably say, by the help of "The Spirit," or "the Holy Spirit," or "the Spirit of God." In fact, there are only two passages in the whole New Testament which speak of "the Spirit of Christ," and these passages don't mean the Holy Spirit at all, but only "the disposition" of Christ. In fact, in these two passages the word "Spirit" is used with the like meaning as in the passages which talk of the "Spirit of Antichrist," "Spirit of bondage," "Spirit of fear," "Spirit of error," "Spirit of meekness," "Spirit of knowledge," etc., etc.

4. "*Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but*

not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death."

This clause limits the subject of Prayer to a much greater extent than the Word of God. The clause says, "Prayer is to be made for things lawful." Now there may be great differences of opinion as to what things are lawful. I may consider many things lawful, which you consider to be unlawful; indeed, scarcely two men could be found to agree on that point. But the Word of God puts no such stumbling-block in man's way. Our Blessed Lord himself says: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark xi. 24. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matt. xxi. 22. Paul lays down the same general law: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. iv. 6.

We are human, weak, fallible beings; we know not what we should pray for as we ought. But we have wants, we have ambitions, we have desires; we have difficulties to overcome, trials to endure, temptations to resist, griefs to suffer. For everything, therefore, which we think we wish, or feel that we want, or desire to obtain, or wish to avoid, we must prostrate ourselves at the throne of grace, and ask it in prayer; leaving the granting of our requests to him who seeth not as man seeth; but who is so loving to us that he will give us our request if it be good for us; or will withhold it, if the granting it would produce our ruin.

In the above clause it also says that "Prayers are not to be made for the dead." I have in vain endeavoured to convince myself that prayers for the dead are forbidden; for I cannot find a single passage in the New Testament which forbids such prayers. It appears to me that this

dogma was taken up by Protestants to oppose that of the Roman Catholics, who pray for the dead; and who use many priestly and unscriptural devices regarding such prayers, in order to magnify the power of their priests, and enrich their church. I object to all masses for the dead, and all other unscriptural priestly devices, in reference to this subject, as much as any man; but I am clearly of opinion that it is a very different thing to say that we are not to pray for the dead. We protestants acknowledge that the Church is composed as well of those who are dead to this world's life, as of those who still walk on the Earth's surface. The man is not dead, though his body is. Jesus himself preached this doctrine: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," Matt. xxii. 31; and instanced as the living, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had at that time been dead to this world's life for more than two thousand years. Paul preached the very same doctrine when he says that Jesus is "Lord both of the dead and living." Rom. xiv. 9.

Till the Great Day of Judgment, therefore, I suspect that it is not only conform to Scripture, but also to our Reason, that the Eternal condition of sinners may be improved by the intercession of others. For instance, we are assured by John that a man's sins may be forgiven through the intercession of another: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask (God), and he (God) shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." 1 John v. 16. James also assures us that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;" and again, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." v. 15, 16. But Jesus himself, while still on earth, distinctly taught that the condition of the souls of the dead might be, and would be changed, on

the use of the proper means; for he said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, *and they that hear shall live.*" John v. 25. Peter, in his First Epistle, tells us how this prediction of our Saviour was fulfilled, by the Spirit of Jesus descending to Hades, after his crucifixion, to preach to the Spirits in Prison who had been disobedient: "Christ being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison which sometime were disobedient." 1 Peter iii. 18-20. But Peter, to assure us that this was truly what he meant, adds, in a few verses further on: "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." 1 Peter iv. 6. Paul alludes to the same subject in his masterly Epistle to the Hebrews; and the allusion is all the more important, because undesigned, and made for another purpose altogether. Yet Paul's teaching is distinct, that the condition of the souls of men may be improved after death; for he says of all the old saints of God that their condition was not made perfect but through us Christians: "All these having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises; God having provided some better things for us, *that they without us should not be made perfect.*" Rom. xi. 39, 40.

If we lay all these passages together, one conclusion seems to be inevitable, viz., that the condition of the souls of men may be changed after they are dead, just as if they still lived. Therefore, it is just as right to pray for the souls of those who are dead, as it is to pray for the souls of those who are still alive. *The man is not dead,* though the Soul has fled from the mortal body.

The Confession of Faith founds its assertion as to its not being lawful to pray for the dead on a passage which

has not the slightest bearings on the question, 2 Sam. xii. 21. David was weeping, fasting, and *praying for the temporal life of the child* which Bathsheba had born unto him. God saw fit to refuse to listen to his prayer, and the child died. So the moment the child died, David rose up, *and ceased praying for the temporal life of the child.* The Parable of Lazarus, also quoted, has no bearings on the case in point. It is a parable to illustrate the necessity of doing good in this life; and it represents the final Judgment, Lazarus in heaven, and the rich man in hell. The Westminster Divines prudently do not misquote the passage from Ecclesiastes, of which modern preachers make so much; as even they were perfectly conscious the words written have no reference to this subject; viz., "If the tree fall towards the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be." xi. 3. Were we so to misquote Scripture, we could extract any meaning we pleased from it.

This, then, being a subject on which different opinions may be held, each compatible with true Christianity; as we admit that the soul of man never dies; that, though dead to this world, the man still remains a member of the Church; that the Final doom is not pronounced till the Great Day of Judgment, when soul unites with the body; that the prayers of a righteous man avail much; that we are commanded to pray for one another; that the sins of another may be forgiven on our intercession; and that the condition of souls may be changed after death;—admitting, I say, all these, I am not sure but that it is the duty of every Christian to pray that the sins of their deceased friends may be forgiven. I am therefore of opinion that the Roman Catholics have the advantage of us in this respect; though with them it has led to great abuses through priestcraft. With the Protestant such abuses

could never arise. Till I am further enlightened, therefore, on this subject, I must hold that it is lawful, because it is Scriptural, to pray for the dead.

5. "*The reading of the scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as also the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God; besides religious oaths and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner.*"

6. "*Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is, now under the gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself; so more solemnly in the publick assemblies, which are not carelessly or wilfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God, by his word or providence, calleth thereunto.*"

To both of these clauses I agree, believing them to be agreeable to the Scriptures. I therefore hold, and am clearly of opinion, that the practice of our Church in withholding the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper from being administered in any place where two or three are met together in the name of Christ, is contrary to the Scriptures, and contrary to the profession here set forth. Such a

restraint is the remnant of old heathen prejudice, or rather of doubly distilled heathenism, for it is not even Judaism. Do our ministers not see that wherever it is lawful to preach (which is the highest act a minister can perform), and to administer the sacrament of Baptism, there it must also be lawful to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

A Jew, converted to Christianity, recognising that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to supersede and come in the place of the Jewish Feast of the Passover, would at once agree that the Lord's Supper should be administered wherever two or three were met together in the name of Christ. He would arrive at this conclusion, *first*, because the Passover was not held in the Temple, but in each man's private dwelling; and *secondly*, because it required no priest to attend its celebration or administer it. If, then, in such a truly ceremonial religion as that of the Jews, the sacred rite of the Passover was celebrated in a common room, and required no priest, each family, or company, holding that rite by themselves; it is clear as reason can make it that the rite which now supersedes the Passover ought to be celebrated in the very same manner.

The Lord's Supper unquestionably superseded an ordinance, or rite, which was celebrated in a private dwelling, and neither in a synagogue nor in the Temple; and it required no priest for its celebration. I hold it therefore to be clearly established, that wherever two or three meet together in the name of Christ, there may they celebrate among themselves the dying love of Jesus, as brought to remembrance in the Lord's Supper. There is nothing in the Scriptures to prevent their doing this, but everything to encourage them to do it; and it is miserable prejudice alone, and an utter ignorance of the above facts, which prevent the Clergy of all protestant Churches from administering the Lord's Supper in private dwellings, or wherever

two or three meet together in the name of Jesus. The English Church has much clearer ideas on this point; and, of course, a purer practice. Aye, a lesson might even be taken, on this subject, from the corrupt Church of Rome.

7 "*As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.*"

To this clause, relating to the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath, I cannot agree. In my remarks on the various chapters of the Confession I have had occasion to lament how much the Westminster Divines confused together the Old and the New Testament Dispensations. This is another striking instance of the same. And yet the Jew and the Christian are as opposed to each other in all that regards their special holiday, as they are on all other points of their respective religions.

In entering on this inquiry, as throwing much light upon it, let us seriously ask of ourselves the question: What is the vital difference between the Jewish and the Christian Revelations?—between the Old and the New Testaments? That is to say, What is the prominent basis of Faith in each?

The special object of the Jewish Religion was to keep up the knowledge of one True God, the Creator of Heaven and of Earth. To keep up this knowledge, and preserve the Jew as a separate nation from all others on the face of the Earth, the Jew was commanded to *observe the seventh day as a day of rest from work*, to commemorate the finished work of creation; to commemorate that the Great God, who had created all things, rested on the seventh day from the work of creation. The Law of the Sabbath was therefore to the Jew by far the greatest of all the Commandments; and its observance was the special sign that they were the chosen people of God. More than this, it was the very essence of the Covenant or Testament which God made with the Children of Israel, and thereby bound them to be his people. See how strong are the words declaratory of this: "Wherefore the Children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.

We thus see that the Sabbath was strictly limited to the Jewish People. It was the test of their whole faith; and it, with circumcision, were the signs of their being God's own people; in fact, the Sabbath was the especial test of their obedience. Its observance tested whether they were worshippers of the One only true God, the Creator of all things; or whether they were idolaters. When the Jew failed to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest from work, he was an idolater; he thus showed that he had forsaken the worship of the Creator of all. Those, therefore, who broke the Law of the Sabbath were not only guilty of sacrilege, but they were, in addition, guilty of rebellion and of treason; because God was not only the God, but also

the temporal King of the Jewish Nation, the Temple being his Palace, and the Levites his court attendants. The Sabbath-breaker was, therefore, punished with death, the punishment in all nations for rebellion and treason: "Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death. . . . Whosoever doth any work on the Sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death." Exod. xxxi. 14, 15.

What, then, is the prominent basis of faith in the Christian Religion? We have already stated that the main object of the Christian religion is to make known Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Mediator, the propitiation for the sins of mankind. As the Sabbath, typifying the rest from the work of creation, was the distinguishing mark of the Jewish Religion; so the distinguishing mark of the Christian Religion is "the Resurrection of Christ." "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . . If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17. How then does the Christian mark this basis of his faith? *He does it by holding as his holiday the first day of every week, because on that day the Saviour burst the cerements of the Tomb, and rose from the grave.*

The Christian's holiday, therefore, will not be the seventh day of the week, or Sabbath; but it will be the First day of the week,—the Sunday, or Lord's Day; a day opposed in everything to the Jewish Sabbath—the Jew's day of rest from work. And why is it opposed to the Sabbath? Because the Sabbath typified rest from work; aye, and to us Christians typifies also Christ's rest or sleep of death in the grave. But the Lord's Day is a day commemorative of active energy; commemorative of a rising from the rest and inactivity of the grave; a day commemorative of a return to life; commemorative of triumph and victory, of rejoicing, feasting, and gladness.

Every man of the most ordinary reasoning powers will at once see from this statement, that with the change of day, change of name and change of the object in holding the day, there must also of necessity be a change in the manner of observance. In a somewhat similar case, viz., change of Priesthood, Paul says, "For the Priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also in the Law." Heb. vii. 12. From this parallel fact, then, we may with the most perfect certainty conclude that there must also of necessity be a change in the Law regarding the mode of observing the Christian's only holiday. Whatever, therefore, the old abolished Law relative to the Jewish Sabbath may have been, it matters not to the Christian, except as mere matter of history; because, as the object of the Christian's holiday is not the commemoration of the rest from the Creation, but the commemoration of the Saviour's rising from the sleep and rest of the tomb, it follows of necessity that the Christian's holiday must be spent as a day of activity and not of rest, as one of life and not of death, as one of triumph and of rejoicing, not of inactivity and gloom.

Both Reason and Revelation agree on this point; and oppose the Christian giving a Judaical observance to his holiday, or styling it by the inappropriate name of the Sabbath.

But the Sabbatarians will argue that I have yet to prove that the Sabbath was abolished; because, as the Jew was commanded to keep the Sabbath "for ever," so they aver that the Christian is bound also to observe it to the end of time, because it formed one of the Ten Commandments, which Commandments they style the "Moral Law," and assert are binding on all men to the end of Time.

It will at once be conceded that the Sabbatarian never

made a stronger statement relative to the obligation of the Jew to observe the Sabbath than that which I have made in opening this discussion. I hold that to the Jew the Law of the Sabbath was the very chiefest of the Commandments; and that the keeping of the Sabbath was the diagnostic sign of the Jew being a worshipper of the true God. I grant, moreover, that, for that reason, the keeping of the Sabbath is more frequently alluded to in the Old Testament writings than any other of the Jewish Laws. But none of these circumstances prove that the Sabbath was to be observed by all men to the end of Time. None of these circumstances prove that that Sabbath Law was not to be set aside, and be abolished. Other Laws given by God with equal solemnity, and though said to be "for ever," are now abolished, set aside, done away, and made as if they had never been, and this by God's own directions. Is it not possible to conceive that this Sabbath Law may be also one which is abolished by the same authority?

Let us look at this subject. And though much of what I have to state is merely the repetition of what has already been demonstrated, still, for the sake of completing the discussion relative to the Sabbath in one place, I prefer to repeat shortly what has been already proved, rather than leave the discussion incomplete.

The Sabbath Law was first laid down by Moses to the Children of Israel. The historical notice of the sanctifying the seventh day, when the earth was created, is clearly nothing more than a historico-traditionary narrative to satisfy the Jew why it was that the seventh day was chosen as his weekly holiday. In the only account we have of that transaction, there is not the very slightest intimation made that man was to observe it, or that man ever kept it up to the days of Moses. And if we read attentively the words of the Sabbath law as laid down by Moses, we shall not

only satisfy ourselves on this point, but also convince ourselves that the Sabbath was intended solely for the Children of Israel, and for no other people on the face of the Earth. See how pointed are the words: "Speak thou also unto the Children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; *for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations*, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Exod. xxxi. 13. "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doth any work in the sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, *to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual Covenant.* It is *a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever;* for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Exod. xxxi. 15–17.

We thus see from these quotations, that the Sabbath was strictly limited to the Children of Israel, and that it was the sign of the Covenant between God and the Children of Israel. Now it is clear as words can make such a subject, that if the observance of the Sabbath was the sign of the Covenant between God and the Children of Israel, it could not have been commanded to all men, and made binding on all men at and from the Creation. For if all men were bound to observe it, and if it had been made binding on all men from the creation, it never would have been chosen as the sign that the Jew kept God's covenant; for in that case it could be no sign, or distinguishing mark at all. We thus see the words clearly limit the observance of the Sabbath to the Children of Israel throughout their generations, and that it was first instituted for them, and appointed as the very sign of the Covenant made with them.

In the quotations from Exodus, given above, occur the words "for ever," and "everlasting," as applied to the

Sabbath. For the full discussion of the meaning of these words as they are used in the Scriptures, I must refer to what was said at p. 127. Here I need only remark that they do not mean "for ever" as we moderns use that phrase, but only for the length of the nation's life. In fact, these phrases, as applied to the Jewish Sabbath, have exactly the same limited meaning which they have when applied to "circumcision," to "the Passover," to the "Priesthood of Aaron," etc.

But this Sabbath Law was the Fourth of the Ten Commandments. Now what were the Ten Commandments? *They were the words of the Covenant which God made with the Children of Israel when he chose them alone out of all the nations of the Earth to be his peculiar people!*

The Westminster Divines, and all our modern churches, have entirely overlooked this striking fact. Hence the reason why they make such gross mistakes as to how the Christian's holiday ought to be observed. Hence their singular blunder in styling these Ten Commandments "the Moral Law;" and in insisting they shall be binding on Christians. Hence the comicality of inscribing these Ten Commandments, these words of the First and now abolished Covenant, on the walls of Christian Temples; and venerating with an ignorant but superstitious reverence that which Paul condemned as "a ministration of death," "a ministration of condemnation," "an enmity," "a yoke of bondage"! I therefore beg particular attention to the following passages of Scripture:—

"And the Lord said unto Moses: Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a Covenant with thee and with Israel. . . . And he wrote upon the Tables the words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments." Exod. xxxiv. 27, 28. "The Lord our God made a Covenant with us in Horeb, . . . saying,

I am the Lord thy God," etc. (Here follow the Ten Commandments.) "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire, and of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice. And he added no more. And he wrote them in two Tables of Stone, and delivered them unto me." Deut. v. 2–22. "So I turned, and came down from the Mount; and the Mount burned with fire; and the two Tables of the Covenant were in my two hands." Deut. ix. 15. It may be remembered also, that the Ark which contained these Tables was always styled "The Ark of the Covenant." Josh. iii. 3, 6, 8, 17, etc.

We thus see that it is fully proved that the Ten Commandments were the very words of the Covenant which God made with the Children of Israel,—in fact, were the Covenant itself; and the whole of the Laws which followed were simply the application of these Ten Commandments to the peculiar mode of worship, and to the civil and religious requirements of the people.

Now it is necessary to recall what has been already proved relative to Covenants and Testaments (see p. 99); and distinctly to understand that all the Covenants of which we have to speak in this discussion are truly Testaments, and ought to have been so translated in our English Bibles. There are not two Greek words used, of which the meaning of the one is "covenant," and that of the other "Testament;" but one Greek word alone is used, which in every instance ought to have been translated by the English word "Testament." And in all the quotations about to be made regarding "Covenants" and "Testaments," the word Covenant ought invariably to be altered to "Testament." The quotations, however, will be given in the words of the English Translation, when each reader can alter the words for himself.

Every one who knows the Scriptures is aware that Paul, in his almost every Epistle, teaches us that this Covenant, or Testament, which was made with the Children of Israel was abolished and done away by the death of Jesus. Every one also knows, or ought to know, that Paul styles that Mosaical Covenant "The First Covenant," or rather "First Testament," because it was superseded by the Second or New Testament brought in by Jesus. As the Westminster Divines, however, did not know this fact, and as the Sabbatarians are equally ignorant, it is necessary shortly to repeat the proofs which have already been adduced on the subject when commenting on Chap. VII., which treats of God's Covenants with Man.

Paul says, "If that First Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the Second." Then, quoting Jeremiah, he says, "The days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the Land of Egypt." Heb. viii. 9. And again, "In that he saith, A New Covenant, he hath made the first Old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Heb. viii. 13. "Then verily the First Covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary; for there was a Tabernacle made," etc. Heb. ix. 1. And yet again: "Whereupon neither the First Testament was dedicated without blood; for when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying: This is the blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined unto you." Heb. ix. 18–20.

These quotations, then, must satisfy every one that the

Covenant, or rather Testament, which Paul calls "the First Covenant," was indeed that very Covenant whose words were the Ten Commandments written on the Two Tables of Stone.

Let us, then, no longer remain blind to the fact that it was that very Covenant which was abolished and done away by Jesus bringing in the New Covenant by his death.

"In that he saith, A New Covenant, he hath made the First old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Heb. viii. 13. "He taketh away the First, that he may establish the Second." Heb. x. 9. "There is verily a disannulling of the Commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." Heb. vii. 18. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the Law of Commandments in ordinances." Eph. ii. 15. "These are the two Covenants: the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage." Gal. iv. 24. "If the ministration of death, written and engraven on Stones, was glorious, . . . which ministration was to be done away. . . . If the ministration of condemnation be glory. . . . If that which is done away was glorious." 2 Cor. iii. 7–11. "The children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." 2 Cor. iii. 13. "Now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held." Rom. vii. 6. "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14.

These passages, then, prove that the First Covenant (the Ten Commandments), was abolished, and done away, and made dead, by the death of Jesus bringing in the Second or New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace.

How, then, dare any one maintain that one of these abolished Ten Commandments is still binding on the Christian? Will those who hold that the Fourth Commandment is still binding on the Christian deign to point out to me

the passage in the New Testament which exempts it from the fate of all the Ten Commandments? I have been unable to find such a passage, and must believe that none such exists.

But the Sabbatarian cannot see facts even when presented to him, and, blinded by his Jewish prejudices in favour of the Fourth Commandment, very childishly argues, that, being a stringent Law of God, and more frequently alluded to than any other by the Old Testament writers, it must remain to all ages a Law of God binding on his church. In other words, the Sabbatarian means to say, that what was once a law of God to one people, must still remain a law of God to another people; and that God has no right to change a law which he once lays down. This is the mode in which they show the low ideas they have of the Great God, and the mode in which they consider he shows his "immutability."

Were their low ideas of the Great God true, then no law of God once laid down ever would or could be changed. Just let us see how completely the Scriptures disprove such erroneous teaching. The token of God's covenant with Abraham and the children of Israel was, that every man-child was to be circumcised. "Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the Covenant betwixt me and you. . . . And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii. 11, 14. That command and law is now abolished. The Passover was commanded to be kept "as a feast by an ordinance for ever." Exod. xii. 14. Is not that law also now abolished? It was one of the stringent laws of God, that the children of Israel should not eat any four-footed animal unless it chewed the cud and was cloven-footed; and even of these, no manner of fat was

allowed to be eaten, under penalty of death. Lev. vii. 23, 25, and ix. Will any one even pretend that that law is still in force? No man was allowed to be a Priest to God unless he belonged to the Tribe of Levi, nor to serve at the Altar unless of the seed of Aaron; and we know how severely they were punished who belonged not to that tribe, who presumed to take on them the Priest's office (Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the presumption of King Uzziah). Does any man pretend to say that that old Law of God is not now abolished?

Now, hundreds of other instances might be adduced to show, that what was once a stringent Law of God, and declared to be an ordinance for ever, is now no law at all; but that it has been superseded and put an end to, by some other Law taking its place. Is there anything in the Law of the Sabbath to exempt it from a similar abolition? With regard to many of the former laws of God to the Children of Israel, we have not the specific injunction abolishing them; but with regard to the old Sabbath Law, we have the most direct evidence, and proof, and command that it is abolished, and is done away; and how men can shut their eyes to such strong facts I cannot understand.

In some of the modern Treatises on the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath, great stress is laid on such phrases as "for ever," "everlasting," "perpetual," as applied to it. The writers of such treatises thus show their complete ignorance of the Scriptures, else they would have been aware that, excepting in a very few instances indeed, all such phrases only mean "for a long period," and generally only mean, "for the length of a nation's life," or "for the life of a generation." Thus, speaking of the Aaronitic priesthood, and forbidding them to use strong drink when they enter the Tabernacle, it says, "It shall be a statute for ever." Lev. x. 9. Then of the servant who refused to go out free

without his wife, "he shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever." Exod. xxi. 6. Of the Passover it is said, "Ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." Exod. xii. 17. The same phrases are used with regard to circumcision, which, with the Sabbath, constituted the signs of the First Covenant, the Ten Commandments. "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Gen. xvii. 13. But we know that neither this covenant, nor its sign of circumcision, were everlasting in the common sense of that term; circumcision died along with that first covenant when Jesus by his death abolished it, and brought in the New Covenant of Grace. Are these words, then, to receive one interpretation when they are applied to the one sign of that abolished covenant, viz., the sign of circumcision, and to receive a different interpretation when they are used in connection with the other sign of that same covenant, viz., the sign of the Sabbath? No assuredly. In both cases they must have the same limited meaning; in both cases they only mean that these signs were to continue to be observed so long as the Jewish nation continued under that First covenant, the Ten Commandments, viz., till the death of Jesus.

The Westminster Divines and modern Sabbatarians seem to have got bewildered regarding the Sabbath, from finding that Jesus our Lord observed it. They appear to have quite forgotten that Jesus was a Jew, and lived under the First Covenant, or Mosaical Law, and came to fulfil that Law. That Covenant (or Law) of which the Sabbath and circumcision were the two signs, was in full force till Jesus died, and by his death abolished it. He came to fulfil all righteousness; he came to obey the whole law, and show an example of obedience to it because it was God's law, and was then in full force. He was therefore circumcised the eighth day, and kept the Sabbath. That Testament, Cove-

nant, or Law, did not expire till Jesus bowed his head on the cross, and said, "It is finished." His example, therefore, in observing the Sabbath, and in being circumcised, is no rule for the Christian; for the object of his death was to put an end to that first Covenant the Ten Commandments, and of course to abolish, at the same time, the signs of that Covenant, viz., Circumcision and the Sabbath.

Now, if the apostolic writings are looked at with an understanding heart, this fact will be seen to be most strikingly brought out. If Jesus had intended the Sabbath to be exempted from abolition, there cannot be the slightest doubt but that he would have instructed his apostles to preach its observance, more especially when they addressed the Gentiles, who knew no Sabbath. It is to be remembered that the Gospel was not to be confined to the Jews, who were accustomed to observe a Sabbath, but was to be preached to the nations of the world who knew no Sabbath, and never held one. As the Sabbath, therefore, was the very chiefest of the Jewish Commandments, and the very sign of the Jew being one of God's own people, when the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles there would be numerous and repeated directions given for the observance of the Sabbath, if the Gentile Christians were to observe a Sabbath. But the very remarkable fact stares us in the face, that in not one of the New Testament writings is there a single hint given that the Gentiles were to observe a Sabbath! On the other hand, there are several passages which distinctly prove that he is not to observe a Sabbath. For instance, Paul, when warning the Colossians against the Judaizing teachers, says: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the New Moon, or of the Sabbath-days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. . . . Which things indeed have a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility,

not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." Col. ii. 16–23.

But Paul in one of his Epistles introduces this very subject; for the Sabbatarian controversy appears to have been as rife among the Jewish Christians as in our own day. He says: "One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike." And what is Paul's decision? It is quite opposed to the Sabbatarian views, for he continues: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Rom. xiv. 5. Now, if the Sabbath was to have been observed, Paul had here a most excellent opportunity of enforcing its obligation. But he did nothing of the kind; he knew that Christ's death had abolished the First Covenant, the Ten Commandments; he knew that all such ceremonial observances as fixed holidays, and meats, and drinks, was Judaism, and not Christianity: so he gave no countenance to such Jewish observances.

But Paul did more than this; he not only condemned the practice of the Judaico-Christian, but he condemned strongly their unchristian spirit in endeavouring to force their opinion upon others: "For," says he, "why is my Liberty judged by another man's conscience?" 1 Cor. x. 29.

But Paul goes a step further, and holds that those who made an outcry about such ceremonial things as holidays are scarcely Christians; in fact, are still Jews who have not yet learned Christ. "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Gal. iv. 9–11.

We thus see that Paul invariably decided against the Sabbatarian. And how, indeed, could he do otherwise, when he had just proved that the First Covenant, the Ten Commandments, of which the Sabbath law was one, was a

ministration of death, a ministration of condemnation, a yoke of bondage, an enmity, a weak and beggarly element?

But we have still another instructive incident narrated in the New Testament which corroborates all the conclusions we have already arrived at, and of itself ought to prove sufficient to settle the whole controversy. When the Jews who had become converts to Christianity at Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia sought to impose the Mosaical Laws on the Gentile Christians, these appealed to the Apostles and Church at Jerusalem. Now, as the Law of the Sabbath was the very first in importance of the Mosaical laws, and the very sign of the Jew's Covenant with God, had God intended the Gentile Christian to observe a Sabbath, he would undoubtedly by his Holy Spirit have directed the Apostles specially to direct that a Sabbath should be observed. Let us see whether this was done.

The Apostles and Elders came together to consider the matter, and James presided; and, after much discussion, Peter gave his opinion in his usual bold, independent style, calling out, "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our Fathers nor we were able to bear?" When all had done speaking, James gave his opinion, which was adopted as the decision of the Assembly. "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned unto God; but that we write unto them that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." The decision, therefore, was as follows:

"The Apostles and Elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and

keep the Law, to whom we gave no such commandment, it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from meats offered unto idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." Acts xv. 10–29.

One would have thought that the above decision of the Apostles would have put down all clamour among the Jewish Converts, seeing their decision was immediately directed by the Holy Spirit. But no! The Judaizing Christians were a strong body, and as bigoted in those days as are our Modern Sabbatarians. Accordingly, a few years afterwards, when Paul returned to Jerusalem, these zealots raised a strong party against him; and were the cause of the Apostles again affirming their former decision in the following remarkable words: "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing (as the Laws of Moses), save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication." Acts xxi. 25.

All the above quoted passages, then, and all the foregoing reasonings, prove to demonstration that the whole of the Jewish Sabbath law is abolished, and that no Christian is bound to observe any Sabbath-day. These passages and reasonings, on the other hand, demonstrate that, if the Christian holds one day more holy than another, it will be the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, a day in everything opposed to the Jewish Sabbath. The one, the Jewish

Sabbath, commemorative of rest from the Creation, a type therefore of rest from work as well as of rest in the grave; —the other, the Lord's Day, commemorative of the rising of Jesus from the dead,—a type therefore of activity, and life, and victory, and gladness.

In fact, the whole object of the Christian observing a holiday is utterly diverse from, and opposed to, the observance of a Sabbath; and the man has denied his Christian faith who observes a Sabbath, or who attempts to apply to the Christian's holiday either the name or the duties of the Jewish Sabbath. These men forget that the Jewish Sabbath typified the rest from the work of creation; and to us, in addition to that, it typifies the rest of Jesus in his grave. But the Lord's day, the day which we Christians observe, typifies the rising from the dead, the rising from the rest and sleep of death, the rising to a new life, the rising to a state of activity—not sleep and rest; so that in everything it is opposed to the Jewish Sabbath.

But those who hold that the Lord's Day is only the Jewish Sabbath changed to the First day of the week from the seventh day, in order to account for the universal change of day among Christians, are obliged to make a statement which they know is false, and cannot be proved. Thus this Confession avers that that day, "from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the First day of the week." If the Westminster divines, however, had been acquainted with history, they would have known that this was a false account of matters; for the early Christians, who were chiefly Jews, held the Jewish Sabbath, or seventh day, as a day of Rest; while they also held the First day of the Week, or Lord's Day, as the free Lord's day, and as a commemoration of Christ's resurrection. But what proves that the views which I have expressed relative to these different days are correct, is the unanswerable fact that there

is not the slightest hint given in any part of the Scriptures that any change of day was ever to be made, or ever was made. And man has no right of himself to change both a day, and the object for which that day was held holy, unless he has the express command of God for the change.

Now the Sabbatarian insists that the Fourth Commandment is still binding, and that God has not abolished it. Will he, then, deign to show me the authority from God which authorizes him both to change the day, and the object for which that day was to be held sacred or holy? The words of the Fourth Commandment, which the Sabbatarian pretends to reverence, limit the observance of the Sabbath to the Seventh day, and command that it shall be observed as a day of rest, to commemorate God's resting from the work of Creation. See how specific are the words: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the Seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it." Exod. xx. 9–11.

The fact is, if the Seventh day of the week be not observed as the Jewish Sabbath, the very object of its institution is lost. It is pure jesuitry, of which every Christian should be ashamed, to argue that holding every seventh day as a Sabbath is the same thing, whether that day be the last or the first day of the week. But the fact is, no two things can be more opposed than the holding as the sacred day the seventh or the first day. If the seventh day of the week be held as the holiday, it commemorates the rest from the work of creation; and, to be kept holy,

must be observed as a day of rest from work for ourselves, our servants, and our cattle. But if the first day of the week be observed as the holiday, it commemorates the rising of Jesus from the rest and sleep of the grave, and therefore cannot be observed as a mere day of rest, but as one of activity, triumph, and rejoicing.

As already explained, the very object of the Jewish Sabbath was to keep up the knowledge of the one only God, the Creator of all things; and this was done by connecting the Creation with a tradition of God taking six days to form the Earth, and resting from his work on the seventh day. "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual Covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and Earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.

But the Christian, on the other hand, pointedly observes as his holiday, not the seventh, but the First day of the week; and I have already fully explained why he does so. It is to commemorate the day on which Jesus rose from the grave. It is to keep in remembrance the Resurrection of Jesus, the foundation of the Christian's faith. His object, therefore, in holding a weekly holiday is in all points diverse from that of the Jew; and both the day on which that holiday is held, and the object for which it is held being different, its observance must also be different.

Seeing, then, that the Christian's holiday, and the object for which that holiday is held, are utterly diverse from the Jewish weekly holiday, there was no need for the Apostles taking any notice of the old abolished Jewish Sabbath. This is the reason why none of the writers in the New Testament take any notice of a change of day. There

could be no change of day when the observance of the one day was abolished by the death of Jesus, and died with the rest of the Mosaical law; and when the other day is kept by Christians to commemorate an entirely different object, viz., the Resurrection of Christ.

But I am not done with the Sabbatarians. We have the sure word of God to assure us that if we believe any law to be binding on our Consciences, that law is binding on us, and we shall be called to account to God at the Great Day of Judgment for the mode in which we have kept that Law. Now the Sabbatarian professes to believe that the Fourth Commandment, and the Jewish Sabbath Laws, are still binding on him. Let me then speak a word to his conscience, and tell him that, without knowing it, he is guilty of one of the greatest sins of which mortal man can be guilty. Professing to obey the Fourth Commandment as a binding law of God, he dares to set up his own judgment against that of God, *and alters the whole words of that Commandment—alters the Scriptures.* For God strictly prescribes that his *Sabbath* shall be held on the seventh day, and also that it shall be held sacred as a day of rest from work, as a commemoration of his resting from the work of Creation. But the Sabbatarian dares blasphemously to say that the day which he will hold, and still call the Sabbath, shall neither be the seventh day of the week, nor shall it be held sacred as a day commemorative of God's resting from the Creation; but that it shall be the first day of the week, and shall be kept as a commemoration of the rising of Jesus from the grave.

To the Sabbatarian, therefore, there can scarcely be a doubt, that the fearful denunciations apply which are pronounced against those who dare to alter the word of God. Moses, when God made known his laws to the children of Israel, warned the people of the judgments which would fall

on the head of those who dared to alter his laws; and John, when the Canon of Scripture closed, pronounced the following fearful doom on that same class of offenders: "If any man shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book." Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

8. "*This sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs before-hand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations; but also are taken up the whole time in the publick and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.*"

This whole clause, being founded on a mistaken view of what the Lord's Day really is, must be deleted from the Confession. If, as Paul says, the Christian is free either to observe or not to observe one day more than another, then there can be no obligation to keep holy, in any particular manner, even the Lord's Day. "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Rom. xiv. 5.

Every Christian, however, will rejoice to declare publicly his gratitude to God, by assembling with his brethren on the First day of the Week, to commemorate the Resurrection of his Saviour. But he will do this freely, not from any pharisaical notions of compulsion by an old, exploded, ceremonial Jewish Law.

But even the Jew did not observe his Sabbath as the above clause avers the Sabbath ought to be observed. The Jew was only to observe it as a strict rest from work; rest for himself, as well as for his servants, slaves, and cattle. So strictly was this rest observed at first, that on the Sabbath-day, so long as the Jews were in the wilderness, they were not even permitted to leave their tents: "Abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." Exod. xvi. 29. Neither were they allowed to light a fire on the Sabbath-day, lest their slaves might be forced to do work—to cook: "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath-day." Exod. xxxv. 3.

But with the Jew the Sabbath was a day of feasting. It was one of the Feasts and holy convocations. Let there be no doubt about this: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the sabbath of Rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein, it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." Lev. xxiii. 2, 3. And again, "These are the feasts of the Lord which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, . . . besides the Sabbaths of the Lord." Lev. xxiii. 37.

Now do not let us make mistakes about the meaning of the phrase "Holy Convocations," as applied to the Sabbaths. It had not the modern meaning of "a congregation for public worship;" because, at the time this proclamation was made, Moses had just beforehand commanded that no man was to leave his tent on the Sabbath-day. But if we look at the practice and history of the Jews, we shall at once be able to satisfy ourselves that it simply means that on that day the whole family, with the hired servants and

slaves, were to assemble or convoke as equals around the same Table, and spend the day in feasting and recreating and resting themselves, but carefully abstaining from all servile work. Moses, when he repeated the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel, in Deuteronomy, pointedly refers to this use of the Sabbath; because they themselves had been slaves in Egypt, and could to the full appreciate the relief which rest from work for one whole day in seven gave to a hard-worked slave. In that rehearsal, then, of the Ten Commandments, Moses adds, as an additional reason for keeping the Sabbath-day, "That thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the Land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commandeth thee to keep the Sabbath-day." Deut. v. 14, 15.

Strict rest from servile work, but feasting at the same Table with the servants and slaves, was the only Law which God ever prescribed to the Jew for the sanctification of the Sabbath-day. When the Jew kept the Sabbath thus, he sanctified the Sabbath. People forget the meaning of the word Sanctify as used in the Old Testament. It simply means separation. God separated that day from all others by directing that no work should be done, to keep alive in the Jew the knowledge that the God who separated that day from the other days of the week was the Creator of the world. When the Jew therefore separated that seventh day from all the rest, by abstaining from work himself, and permitting none of his family or slaves to work, but allowed them to rest and refresh themselves, he sanctified that day in the manner which God commanded. When he did this, he held and made the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord, and honoured God by so holding

it. When he did this, he did not do his own ways, nor find his own pleasure, nor give utterance to his own thoughts. But he submitted his ways, and his thoughts, and his pleasure to the Will of God. If, however, he caused any of his servants or slaves to do any servile work on that day, if he made them eat at a separate Table, or in a different room, or if he carried on his ordinary avocations, then he dishonoured the Sabbath, he did not separate, or sanctify it; he was doing his own pleasure, he was following his own will, he was dishonouring God.

All this, however, is to the Christian mere matter of historical interest, as showing how God directed his peculiar people to observe that Sabbath which was intended to keep alive in their breasts the knowledge of the one only true God, the Creator of all things. We know that even down to the latest days of the Jewish nation the Sabbath was observed as a day of feasting; and our Saviour himself accepted an invitation to dine on the Sabbath-day with one of the chief Pharisees, the men who were most particular in observing the Sabbath. Luke xiv. 1.

After the return from the Captivity, the Jews did not confine themselves on the Sabbath-day to their tents or houses, but allowed walking in the fields around their towns, and even to take a Sabbath-day's journey. They also, after the Captivity, were accustomed to meet in the schools, or synagogues as they were called, to be instructed in the Scriptures; and they also were wont to assemble for the same purpose at the water side, and probably any shady place in the open air. Acts xvi. 13. Whether they had any divine permission for these innovations, we know not; as no trace of such permission is even hinted at by any of the prophets.

We Christians, however, have nothing to do with all this. Our Christian holiday is not the Sabbath, the day

commemorative of the rest from the work of Creation; but it is the Lord's Day, commemorative of the Resurrection of the Saviour from the grave—a different day, with a different object, and of course with different duties, and a different mode of observance.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS.

1. "*A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.*"
2. "*The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred. Yet as, in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the word of God under the New Testament, as well as under the Old; so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken.*"
3. "*Whosoever taketh an oath, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to anything but what is good and just, and what he believeth*

so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform. Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority."

4. "*An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt; nor is it to be violated, although made to hereticks or infidels.*"
5. "*A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.*"
6. "*It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith, and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.*"
7. "*No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise of ability from God. In which respects, Popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.*"

I do not see what lawful Oaths and Vows have to do with a Confession of Faith. To my mind, it is perfectly preposterous to have a chapter on such a subject. Besides,

granting (which I do most fully) that oaths were commanded to the Jews in certain cases under the Mosaical Laws, I cannot see that this shows either their propriety, or their admissibility, or necessity under the Christian Dispensation, unless it can also be distinctly proved that there is direct authority for them in the New Testament. In certain circumstances, perhaps, they may be necessary. But there also cannot be the slightest doubt that the New Testament wholly discountenances, nay, positively forbids, the taking or using an oath. Our Saviour, in his first discourse on the Mount, at once points out the marked distinctions between the Old Dispensation which he came to supersede, and that which he came to establish; and I beg especial attention to his distinct and direct teaching; for no equivocal phrases which may be found in the New Testament, and whose meaning the Westminster Divines evidently misunderstood, are to be taken, and founded on, as teaching another doctrine.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, *Swear not at all:* neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. *But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*" Matt. v. 33–37.

James is equally explicit, for he says: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation." James v. 12.

The words of our Saviour, as recorded by Matthew, xxiii.

16–22, give no countenance whatever to taking an oath. Our Saviour's remarks were made for the purpose of showing that the equivocations which the Pharisees introduced into their oaths, in order that the oath might not bind them, were both a fallacy and a sin; and that any oath bound as firmly to its performance, as the most solemn oath. But our Saviour's whole remarks in that discourse had reference to the Practice of the Pharisees under the Mosaical laws; whereas the words quoted from his Sermon on the Mount referred to the Christian or Gospel dispensation.

Oaths, then, whatever this Chapter may declare, are clearly forbidden by the New Testament Laws under which we Gentile Christians live. I should like to know where the authority exists for saying that "it is a sin to refuse an oath imposed by lawful authority." If we were Jews, and lived under the Mosaical law, this would be true; but of course there is not the slightest intimation of any such thing in the New Testament—the only Dispensation under which we Gentile Christians live.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE.

1. "*God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him over the people, for his own glory, and the publick good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.*"

2. "*It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.*"
3. "*The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.*"
4. "*It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience' sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be hereticks, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.*"

This is another chapter which has nothing to do with a Confession of Faith, and ought to be deleted from it. Nothing ought to be in a confession of faith but what hath special reference to religion; whereas this whole chapter is an intermeddling with the purely Civil duties of the Civil Rulers, with which no Church has either a right, or a call, to interfere.

But there are statements made in this Chapter which have no foundation in the New Testament, by which we Gentile Christians are alone bound, nor yet in common sense. Where, I should like to know, is the authority for the absurd statement that "the Civil Magistrate hath authority, and it is his duty to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church; that the Truth of God be kept pure and entire"? I concede that it is the duty of the ministers of the Word, or rulers of the Church, to do all this; but there is not a single hint in any part of the New Testament, by which alone we Gentile Christians are bound, that this is any part of the duty of the Civil Magistrate. Plenty of work the Civil Magistrate would have, did he presume to aver he had such a power, and attempt to put it in force. It must be remembered, that if the Civil Magistrate had such a power, it would necessarily include, not only the Church connected with the State, but all churches of every denomination; and what a precious nest of hornets he would have on his head, did he attempt to model all these according to his own ideas of what churches ought to be!

It is quite true that the Jewish Church was completely subordinate in everything to the Civil Ruler, or King. And why was this? Because the Civil Ruler, or King, was merely the vicegerent of God, who was the temporal as well as the Eternal King of the Children of Israel; and, as his Deputy, had full powers to make what arrangements

he chose in the worship and discipline and whole appointments of that Old Jewish Church.

Accordingly, the ecclesiastics, or Priests of that Old Jewish Church, including the very High Priest himself, were subordinate in everything to the Civil Magistrate. Hence, from the beginning to the very close of the Jewish nation, the whole ritual of worship was settled by the Civil Rulers, and not by the Priests (or church rulers as they would now be called). Accordingly, it was Moses, and not Aaron, who settled and arranged the whole ritual of worship in his day. It was David, and not the High Priest, nor the priests, who arranged the service of the Sanctuary in his day. When Solomon completed the Temple, it was he, the Civil Ruler, and not the Priests, who arranged and fixed the forms of worship; and the same continued to the close of the Jewish Monarchy. Nay, the very High Priest, though he was by the Law bound to belong to the seed of Aaron, was put up or set down according to the will of the Civil Ruler, and was in everything subordinate to him. Moses appointed Aaron. Saul slew Ahimelech the High Priest and appointed Zadock; David removed Zadock, and appointed Abiathar in his room; Solomon removed Abiathar, and elected Zadock to the office of High Priest; and so history informs us the Civil Rulers did down to the very birth of our Saviour. And so ought Victor Emmanuel to treat the Pope.

But, as we are not Jews, but Gentile Christians, we have nothing to do with either the Law or the practice of the Jews under the Theocratic government under which they lived; and it would have thrown doubts on Paul's sanity had he, in his Epistles, told the Christians that Herod, or Festus, or Nero, or other heathen magistrates, were empowered to enter their assemblies and see that the Word of God which they read was (according to his no-

tions) pure and uncorrupted, and that the forms of worship and discipline which the Christian had adopted, were conform to his ideas of what ought to be the worship of any God whom he accepted as his God!

Did these Westminster Divines who drew up these clauses, and do the present rulers of our Churches, not see that if they grant that these clauses express the truths of Scripture, and they themselves conscientiously act on them, it binds them to allow the Civil Magistrate, be he heathen, atheist, or Papist, to be the sole judge of what is Truth? These clauses permit, nay, aver it is the duty of, the Civil Magistrate to interpret the Word as he chooses, nay, to judge what shall be that word, whether the Testament, or the Koran, or the Book of Mormon, or the Vedas, etc. These clauses also grant to the Civil Magistrate the power of the sword to enforce his interpretation on all who are subject to him. They grant him power to order what forms of Public worship he pleases, and to take cognizance of every law which every denomination may adopt for the regulation of its members; and to be the judge of what are heresies and blasphemies!! The fact is, the whole chapter is utterly ridiculous, and is totally opposed both to the Scriptures and to common sense.

In my Remarks on the 4th clause of Chap. XX. I pointed out what were the duties of the civil magistrate. I showed that Civil Rulers are appointed for the good of the community, which may consist of different peoples, with different religious beliefs. Civil rulers, therefore, must enact such laws as shall best promote the welfare of all classes, *irrespective altogether of their religious beliefs;* leaving, in fact, their religion as a matter of conscience between themselves and their God. The civil power is therefore in every sense "the higher power," as it is properly styled by Paul. It is the only power to which both Reason and

Scripture agree in granting the power of life and of death, of punishments and penalties. But all this power of life and of death, of punishments and of penalties, must be alone limited to infractions of the civil laws; and never extend to infractions of the laws drawn up by ecclesiastical bodies; seeing that all laws or rules drawn up by such bodies should alone be obeyed as matters of conscience; or, if disobeyed, merely incur the penalty of expulsion from the religious denomination whose rules the person had broken.

When the subject is properly viewed, therefore, it is seen how utterly ridiculous is any pretensions set forth by the Pope, or any ecclesiastical person or ecclesiastical body whatever, as to his or their being above the civil power. Men have given way to such absurd pretensions apparently from the superstitious fear that these ecclesiastics, or that Pope, could shut them out (if they or he chose) from the kingdom of Heaven; as if any sinful mortal was entrusted with the alone prerogative of God (see Remarks on Chap. XXX.). Let no one be deceived with such unfounded unscriptural pretensions, set forth by Popes or ecclesiastics of any kind. Paul says to all, to ministers of the word as well as to others, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher Powers." Rom. xiii. 1. And Peter follows with the same command: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as Supreme, or unto governors," etc. 1 Peter ii. 13. In no part of either New or Old Testament is the Ecclesiastical Power called the Higher power; indeed, in the New Testament, there is no such thing as an Ecclesiastical power recognised different from what resides in the whole "church," whatever interpretation we may put on that word; and, in every case where such a subject is referred to, that Church and all its members are commanded to obey the civil power.

Seeing such is the case, it is the height of folly to imagine that the poor old woman the Pope has any dominion or power over any but those who bow their necks to his yoke, *and are in his own temporal dominions;* when he has power over them as a civil magistrate, not as the supposed head of their church. By the New Testament he has no power whatever over any civil power, or civil government, nor right to interfere in any way whatever with anything which concerns the civil polity of any state. And it is sincerely to be hoped that the enlightened Governments of Europe will, through the spread of the knowledge of the Gospel, see this subject in its proper light.

The statement in the Third clause, that "the magistrate may not assume to himself the power of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," is an extremely ludicrous one, and proves most unmistakeably how lamentably the Westminster Divines misunderstood the meaning of the words which our Lord addressed to Peter. As this subject, however, is fully discussed in the Remarks on Chap. XXX., I refer to what is there written as to the so-called "Power of the Keys."

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

1. "*Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.*"

2. "*Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.*"

3. "*It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent: yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.*"

4. "*Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own.*"

5. "*Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.*"

6. "*Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way*

be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein a publick and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case."

This is one of the most absurd chapters to have in a Confession of Faith, and is partly founded on some crude notions of civil law, partly on the false doctrine that the Mosaical Law is still in force among Gentile Christians—that false doctrine which pervades the whole Westminster Confession, and renders it only semi-Christian Judaism.

Marriage is undoubtedly a purely civil ordinance; and what it has to do in a confession of religious faith I cannot understand. The whole laws of Marriage are fixed by the Legislature, not by the Church; and the penalties for adultery, and the laws for divorce, are all settled by Acts of the civil Parliament, and must all be judged and determined before the ordinary civil Courts. What a piece of folly and presumption is it, therefore, for a Confession of Religious Faith to make marriage laws one of its subjects for dogmatic teaching!

Supposing, however, that it was right to have the subjects of marriage and of divorce treated of in a Confession of Faith, then the matter ought to have been limited to what the New Testament says regarding them, as it is the only Code of Religious laws binding on the Gentile Christian. The Confession of Faith, however, as in all else, jumbles together the Jewish or Mosaical, with the Christian or New Testament Laws, and mixes up with these, in most admired confusion, some of the civil laws of England, which are opposed both to old and new Testament. This jumbled nonsense is then passed off upon our credulity as if it were the word of God and matter for religious faith!

Let us look, then, at the question of Marriage from a proper point of view, and see what are the principles which ought to guide us in laying down certain rules regarding it. It must, however, be distinctly understood that we are Gentile Christians, who were never at any period of the world's history under the yoke of bondage to the Mosaical Law, and never can be, seeing that law was dead and abolished before we were called to be Christians. Nothing whatever in that Law is therefore binding on us, unless it be re-enacted by Christ, or by his Apostles acting under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in which case it will be found in the writings of the New Testament. Nevertheless there are certain valuable hints which we Gentiles may receive from that Mosaical Law, and which we may adopt, provided they be not opposed to the common principles of our Christian faith.

At the time when the Jewish Law was promulgated Polygamy was in existence, if not prevalent; and it was one of the objects of that Law to set limits to this, or rather positively to discourage it. Hence, when Moses drew up his account of the Creation, he pointedly stated that the Creator made mankind "a male and a female," or one pair only, and referred to marriage between one man and one woman when as yet only one pair existed. We all know from history what domestic unhappiness polygamy has invariably occasioned, and how it has degraded woman to the position of a slave; so that even Solomon, among all his thousand wives and concubines, exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul, "Behold, this I have found, saith the Preacher, counting one by one to find out the account; which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found, but *a woman* among all those have I not found." Eccles. vii. 27, 28.

Had the Creator intended that man should be polygamous,

he would have so ordered it that females should be born in greater numbers than males. Whereas, in every country of the Globe, statistics have proved that the male births exceed the female Births in the proportion of 106 males to every 100 females; but that in the early years of life the male mortality is so much greater than the female, that it is only at the marriageable age of 18 that the numbers of the sexes come to be equalized. From that fact we have the unanswerable argument, that the Creator intended every man to have only one wife. Hence, whatever we may now infer that the Mosaical Law intended (for that is a disputed point, depending on the meaning we attach to certain Hebrew words which bear different translations), this is certain, that, as Christians, we are bound to follow the Christian or New Testament Law, which allows but one man to one woman, but allows the re-marriage of either party provided the other be dead.

But the first Question which arises is, Whom may a man or woman marry? In so far as the New Testament is concerned, this is left an open question for the settlement of the Civil Rulers. Had the Gospel been addressed to Jews alone, it might have been inferred that, as the Mosaical Law laid down certain rules on the subject, these were intended to be kept still in force. But as the Christian Religion is intended for all the nations of the world, for those who had civil laws on this very subject very different from those of the Jews; and as that old mosaical law was totally abolished before the Gentiles were called; it follows, that unless the Mosaical restrictions are re-imposed in the New Testament, it is left to the civil powers to determine that point, as a civil and political, and not as a religious question.

With the strangest inconsistency, however, the Westminster Divines insist on applying to the Christian even

the parts of the Mosaical Laws which they stated in the third and fourth clauses of Chap. XIX. "are now abrogated," and have "expired!" This fact, therefore, shows clearly it was not Christianity, but semi-christian Judaism which these divines taught in all the Confession, as has been most convincingly proved.

Let us see, however, whether the Mosaical Laws followed any rational rule in the prohibitions which they imposed on the Jews as to Marriage. The Experience of all ages has demonstrated, both with regard to man and the lower animals, that frequent mixing, or crossing, of the same blood—breeding in and in, as it is termed—leads to debility of the offspring, degeneration of the species, and in man to the production of insanity, idiocy, congenital deafness and dumbness, congenital blindness, and to scrofula. The Mosaical Law seems to have recognised this great fact; for the general law which it laid down for the regulation of Marriage was, "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him." Lev. xviii. 6. The particulars which are subsequently given are merely the development of that Law, prohibiting marriage with a mother, or mother's sister, with a sister whether by the father's or mother's side, and some other relations which, *during the subsistence of the married state*, stood in the same relation as if they were blood relatives. The reason of that restriction has been quite overlooked by modern divines and modern writers; it was because the Jewish Law acted on the principle that by marriage—*but during the marriage only*—the husband and wife were "one flesh." Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 5; Mark x. 8, etc.

The Church of Rome, however, followed in this respect but too closely by the Protestant Churches, endeavoured to improve upon that judicious and rational law, by enacting that "no man may marry any of his wife's kindred nearer

in blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own." We find no such absurd regulation in the Jewish code; and, as I have already said, we find no restriction whatever imposed on such marriages in the New Testament, which ought to be our sole guide in such matters. Nay, the Jewish Law was so much opposed to any such restrictions, that if an elder brother had married a wife, and died childless, the next eldest brother was bound to marry his brother's widow, and was allowed no choice in the matter. This single fact proves that the Mosaical Law could not contain any prohibition to such kind of marriages; and that any interpretation of passages in the Mosaical Laws which seem to countenance such a restriction must be false interpretations, resulting from mistranslating or misunderstanding the passage.

The New Testament, by whose laws we Gentile Christians are alone bound, lays down a just, intelligible, and easily applied law. "The wife is bound by the Law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, *she is at liberty to be married to whom she will.*" 1 Cor. vii. 39; Rom. viii. 2, 3. Neither in the Epistle to the Corinthians, nor in that to the Romans, is there any prohibition as to whom a widowed person may not marry.

The Westminster Divines, taking their ideas from the abrogated Jewish Laws, derived their conclusions from a singular mistake relative to the meaning of a passage in the Old Testament, and from a ludicrous misapplication of a passage in the New Testament, as we shall now explain.

Among the Patriarchs we find numerous examples of violations of all the marriage Laws laid down by Moses; and it is not only possible, but very probable, that many of the Laws of Moses as to Marriage were drawn up with the view of preventing such marriages among their descendants. For instance, Abraham's life was more than once endan-

gered from his having married his sister; nay, this circumstance on one occasion nearly lost him his wife. Jacob's life also, we know, was embittered by the circumstance of his two wives being sisters; and this fact, no doubt, induced Moses to lay down as a rule for the regulation of Marriage among the Israelites, that a man was not to wife a second sister, so long as the first one lived. "Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, *besides the other in her lifetime*." Lev. xviii. 18. This law being misunderstood by the composers of the Canon Law, and by the Westminster Divines, caused them to prohibit marriage with a deceased wife's relatives. The Mosaical law, however, most wisely only prohibited a man from marrying two sisters at one time; but it clearly never prohibited him from marrying another sister after the death of the first.

The Composers of the Confession, however, must have been very hard pressed for an apology for introducing their prohibitory clause regarding such marriages, when the only passage in the New Testament which could be twisted to their purposes was that in Mark vi. 18. "For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful to have thy brother's wife." This is the most ludicrous misquotation for any purpose whatever, in so far as marriage is concerned. For the husband of Herodias was then living, she had not even been divorced from him, and yet she was openly living with Herod as his mistress,—guilty of the double crimes of adultery and incest. No wonder John remonstrated. Yet very strange this should be quoted by learned divines for any purpose whatever regarding marriage!

But there is another great blunder which the composers of the Canon Law, and following them, the Westminster divines, committed regarding these same Mosaical laws; viz., their confounding the laws against fornication with

the laws regarding marriage. The composers of the Canon Law had an interest in making as many prohibitions as possible regarding marriage, for they had a pecuniary end to gain, by inducing parties, who wished to marry within the prohibited degrees, to pay the church handsomely for a dispensation. But the Westminster Divines had no such apology; and what can be said of the morality of such men, who in one part of this Confession declare that all these laws are abrogated, and are not binding on the Christian, and yet in this chapter asserting that the Christian is bound by them! If any one will take the trouble to read over the several Mosaical Laws relative to marriage, etc., he will satisfy himself that all those usually quoted as relating to Marriage, refer only to sexual intercourse, and not to marriage at all. The prohibitions are, in fact, not against marriage with certain parties, but against fornication with certain relationships; and almost nothing is stated with regard to the marriages of widows and widowers with such relationships. Relative to the High Priest alone was there a distinct command that he should not marry a widow.

With all these Mosaical Laws, however, the Gentile Christian has nothing to do; and as the Christian Law leaves the matter quite open, we are at liberty to form what opinion we please on the subject.

As to the subject, so much debated in our day, as to whether it be right to marry the sister of a deceased wife, it is difficult to see on what stable grounds it can be opposed, or objected to. If a family ought to consist of persons united together by the strong bands of love, then marriage with the sister of a deceased wife is so much more sure to produce union and love between the children of the deceased wife and those of the second wife, that on that ground alone such a marriage may be defended as the very best which a

widower could make. Look abroad at families where half of the family belongs to the wife who is dead, and the other half to the second wife who is alive, and see what discord exists. There is, in general, no cordiality, no love between the children of the two wives. That they are of different lineage, is brought prominently before them every day of their lives. The children of the deceased wife have different grandparents, different aunts, uncles, and cousins, from those of the living wife; visits to their own blood relations are discountenanced by their stepmother; they are not received by her relatives as their kin; and the natural consequence is, that jealousies, strifes, and discord exist, where love and affection ought to make an united family. How very different would matters be, had the widower married a sister of his deceased wife! No woman can have half the love for the motherless children which one of their own blood aunts has; and then, if she also had children, they would have all the same blood relations as the first wife's family—the same grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, and cousins; there would be nothing to bring to the remembrance of the children of the first wife that the living wife was not also their mother; and the whole family would grow up united in love, as if they were the children of the same father and mother. I cannot even conceive how a law allowing such marriages could do harm, but I am fully persuaded that such a law would do much to increase the happiness of all those families which had the misfortune to lose their mother by death.

To resume then. The only prohibition as to marriage should be to prohibit marriage with those near of kin—blood relations. The Mosaic law limited this phrase "near of kin" to those who stood in the relation of Father, mother, son, daughter, brother, and sister only, *and to their wives or husbands during their life;* and for the reason

already mentioned, that the divine law considered married persons as "one flesh."

We may now consider shortly the safeguards to Marriage under the Mosaical Law—a subject too much neglected in this professedly Christian country, and relative to which our laws require alteration. These may be considered under three heads: 1. Laws protective of the woman. 2d. Laws protective of the Marriage relation. 3d. The Laws of Divorce.

1. *Laws protective of the woman.* By the Mosaical Law, which ours would do well to copy, "If a man entice a maid who is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife." Exod. xxii. 16. The father of the maid, however, could refuse to give his daughter in marriage, in which case the man had to pay heavy damages.

This is a just law, and one which our legislature would do well to adopt.

If a maid was betrothed, by the Mosaical Law she was regarded in the light of a married woman; and therefore the punishment for unfaithfulness was the same as that for adultery,—both parties were put to death. But, if the crime had been committed in the country, the woman escaped on the merciful plea that she was forced, and cried for assistance, but that no one was near to help her. The man, however, was stoned to death. Deut. xxii. 23–27.

2. *Laws protective of the Marriage relation.* These, under the Mosaical code, were of the most severe nature. Any man committing adultery with a married woman was put to death along with the partner of his crime. By this proper law no adulterer could live to marry the guilty victim of his seduction; and no woman convicted of adultery could become the wife of her seducer and co-adulterer. It is quite true that in the history of the Jewish nation we find exceptions to this, when the parties committing the crime

were high in station, and the administrators of the Law; as in the case of David and Bathsheba; but that did not alter the Law of God to the Jews as laid down by Moses. The innocent party, therefore, was allowed to marry again; but simply for the reason that the guilty party was dead, having been put to death. It is this fact, misunderstood by our Legislature, and Westminster Divines, which induces the one to allow, and the latter to assert, that "the innocent party may marry again, as if the offending party were dead." This subject will be fully discussed under the next head.

Our Laws, however, with an inconsistency for which it is difficult to account, lay no penalty on an adulterer, unless the aggrieved husband raises an action at law against him; while it does not punish the adulteress unless the husband sues for a divorce. In fact, our laws rather hold out an inducement to break the marriage tie, by permitting the adulteress to marry her guilty paramour. This subject, however, rather belongs to the next head.

3. *The Laws relative to Divorce.* By the Mosaical Law, a man could divorce his wife for any cause, Deut. xxiv. 2; and the man, as well as the divorced woman, could marry again whom they would. But it was wisely provided that in no case whatever, even after the death of her new husband, could the divorced woman again become the wife of him from whom she had been divorced.

We, however, are not Jews, but Gentile Christians; and if we adopt any part of the Jewish Laws as to marriage, let it be distinctly understood that we adopt them from policy alone, and not because any one of them is binding on us. On the subject of Divorce, however, we require no laws but those laid down for the guidance of the Christian in the New Testament; and these, we, as a nation of Christians, are bound to adopt as part of our civil law.

By the New Testament, Marriage was put on a much higher footing than it was in the Old. The Old Mosaic dispensation treated woman more as a slave or chattel than as the companion and equal of man. The man was therefore allowed to change his wife as often as he liked. *But by the Christian Dispensation it is positively declared that the Marriage tie is indissoluble, excepting in the case of one of the parties committing adultery; and in that event, if a divorce is given, neither party is allowed to marry again so long as the other party lives.* To this point I wish most earnestly to direct the attention of our Rulers, seeing that I feel persuaded that the adoption of a similar law would go very far to prevent those scandalous divorce cases which are increasing under the present law—which, indeed, holds out an inducement to adultery.

"It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. But I say unto yon, that whosoever putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." Matt. v. 31, 32. "I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery." Matt. xix. 19. "And Jesus saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Mark x. 11, 12. "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." Luke xvi. 18. "The wife is bound by the Law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will." 1 Cor. vii. 39.

"The woman which hath an husband, is bound by the Law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is freed from the Law of her husband. So then, if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man." Rom. vii. 2, 3. "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband; but if she depart, let her remain unmarried." 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

Such are the Christian's Scripture Laws on the subject of Marriage and Divorce; and if we were true followers of Christ, and not mere pharisaical professors of Christianity, these would also be our Civil Laws, and not those which at present disgrace our Statute Book, aye, and debase this Confession of Faith. The true Christian Law is both stringent in its provisions, and admits of no equivocation. It admits of no quibbles on the subject of divorce, and re-marriage of the guilty or innocent parties. By that pure Law the marriage tie is indissoluble, excepting in the event of one of the parties having been guilty of fornication; and even in that case the divorced parties are most wisely prohibited from forming other marriage ties, so long as the other party lives. A divorced man or woman is by that pure law only allowed to re-marry after the death of their divorced partner.

The reason of this restriction is twofold. As adultery under the gospel dispensation was not to be punished with death, as it invariably was under the Jewish Law, the Scriptural reason for the prohibition was, that the man and woman who were married were in the eyes of God regarded as "one flesh." "They twain shall be one flesh." Matt. xix. 5. "They twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh." Mark x.

8. "For two, saith he, shall be one flesh." 1 Cor. vi. 16. So long, therefore, as the two parties were alive, neither could marry, because, by the New Testament Law of God, the woman was bound by the law of her husband, "*so long as he liveth;*" not merely so long as they remained living together; and even divorce made no change on the law in this respect. Such, then, is the Scriptural reason. But the political or moral reason for that pure law is equally strong. If a man and woman know that, even though divorced, neither can marry so long as the other lives, that knowledge takes away from both parties any inducement to commit adultery or fornication with the view of marrying their guilty paramour. Such a prohibition, therefore, would be a powerful moral Law; and if such were our civil Law, it would have the effect of putting an end to the Divorce Court altogether, and be a powerful incentive even to dissolute minds to behave morally.

When we see such clear and intelligible Commands relative to Marriage and Divorce, laid down in that Christian Law which we as Christians are bound to obey, with what shame do we turn to our Statute Book and see it there declared that divorced men and women may marry again, though the wives or husbands from whom they were divorced still live! The New Testament declares that such parties are guilty of adultery; and yet our Statutes declare such marriages to be legal, and admit the children of such adulterous marriages to all the rights and privileges of legitimate children! The worst feature, however, of all this is, that the professedly Christian Churches, and their church rulers, sanction and give their countenance to such immoralities by permitting their ministers to unite such divorced persons in the sacred bands of matrimony.

It is the faulty state of our Civil Laws relative to Divorce which has led to much of that immorality which

the Divorce Court every day brings to light. The present state of our Law holds out a bounty to Adultery and Divorce. It induces parties to enter the married state without due reflection on its duties and responsibilities; and the moment they find the least incompatibility of temper between themselves and the person they have chosen, instead of making an effort to overcome it, they rather look out for another person who would please them better, and make use of such immoral means as shall bring the question of separation before the Divorce Court. On the Divorce being effected, it generally happens that the guilty parties find consolation in the arms of their guilty co-adulterers.

Let it be once and for ever declared to be the Law of the Land that no divorced person shall be permitted to marry again so long as the person lives from whom they have been divorced, and at once the chief inducement to adultery is withdrawn; and the bounty at present held out to adultery would cease to exist.

The Westminster Divines completely failed to understand the Scriptures when they asserted, in their 5th clause of this Chapter relative to adultery, that, "It is lawful for the innocent party to sue for a Divorce; and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead." As has been already hinted, the Old Mosaical Law allowed the innocent party to marry again, because his guilty wife, along with her co-adulterer, were put to death. And as death frees from all laws, it left the innocent man (or woman) to marry again, *because their guilty partner was dead.* It is quite otherwise, however, with the Christian. The Great Head of the Christian Church himself declares that the marriage tie is indissoluble; and assigns as the reason, that by the decree (one of the mysteries) of God, "they twain shall be one flesh; wherefore they are no more

twain, but one flesh." Matt. xix. 5; Mark x. 8. And Paul twice alludes to the same mystery: "They two shall be one flesh: this is a great mystery." Eph. v. 31; 1 Cor. vi. 16. Our Saviour therefore himself, and His apostle Paul, lay it down as a law strictly deducible from this, that whether the married parties live together or give each other a divorce, they are bound to each other during their life-time; so that they cannot marry another without being guilty of adultery, till one of them is freed by the death of the other: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, *and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.*" Luke xvi. 18. The Christian law, therefore, allows separation, if from adultery; but it strictly prohibits the divorced parties forming new marriage ties, till the first marriage is dissolved by the death of one of the parties.

The whole of this Chapter ought therefore to be deleted from the Confession; or, if the subject be touched on at all, the pure Christian law of marriage and of Divorce, as I have endeavoured to explain it, must be adopted as that which the Scriptures alone teach as agreeable to the Word of God.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE CHURCH.

1. "*The catholick or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ*

the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

2. "*The visible church, which is also catholick or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*"

3. "*Unto this catholick visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.*"

4. "*This catholick church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and publick worship performed more or less purely in them.*"

5. "*The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth to worship God according to his will.*"

6. "*There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.*"

I generally agree to the doctrines taught in this chapter;

but there are some statements made which appear not to be in harmony with the revealed word.

In the first clause, for instance, it says that "the universal Church is the fulness of him that filleth all in all." This statement results from the Westminster Divines having completely misunderstood the meaning of the 23d verse of the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Paul is describing some of the perfections of Christ; and he ends by saying he is the head of the Church (which is his body), and that he is the fulness of him that filleth all in all. This is just in other words saying what he twice repeated to the Colossians, viz., "It pleased the Father that in him (Christ) all fulness should dwell." i. 19. And again, "In him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." ii. 9. But the Westminster Divines, by a curious obliquity of mind, read these words as if they applied to the Church, and so made the unscriptural statement which appears in the first clause of this chapter. These words, as applied to the church, must therefore be deleted from the Confession.

The second clause also makes a statement which is contrary to the distinct teaching of the Scriptures. It says, "Out of the visible Church there is no ordinary possibility of salvation." In my remarks on chap. X., where the subjects of Predestination and Election were fully handled, I proved that such a statement was a complete misrepresentation of Scripture, resulting from not understanding what the Scriptures really did teach. The subject is too large to be again gone over in this place; to what is there written I must therefore refer.

The second clause, however, very properly states that the children of such as are members of the Christian church are also themselves members of that church, and participate in the peculiar privileges of members. It is for this reason that they were called "Holy" by Paul: "Else were your

children unclean, but now are they holy." 1 Cor. vii. 14. Hence the reason why they are Baptized, and are thus dedicated to God, in infancy. Hence the reason why, when they die in infancy, they participate in all the full benefits of Christ's death, and also of the adoption of children to God, and of the grace of Sanctification, in that they receive the remission of all sin.

I demur to speaking of the Pope of Rome as Antichrist. I think we have every reason to believe that the Pope of Rome is Antichrist, the man of Sin; but it is mere assumption after all, and cannot be proved. It is possible it may be Mahomet who is thus alluded to in the Scriptures, or some other person yet to arise. In a Confession of Faith all such specifications, which after all are mere guesses, ought to be left out.

I also demur to speaking of any Church of Christ as a "synagogue of Satan." It is quite true some professedly Christian churches have greatly degenerated from the pure faith of the Gospel, and have so perverted the revealed word, and become so ignorant of that word, that they follow vain traditions alone. Nay, I go further, and acknowledge that they have in some cases gone so far as to profess to admit other mediators besides the only mediator Jesus Christ, and to have carried Mariolatry so far as almost to conceal Christianity. Still I am forced by the strong principle of Christian charity to acknowledge these debased Churches to be still Churches of Christ, and not synagogues of Satan; so I would delete these obnoxious epithets as applied to them from my Confession of Faith.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

1. "*All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. And being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces; and are obliged to the performance of such duties, publick and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.*"
2. "*Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.*"
3. "*This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away or infringe the title or property which each man hath in his goods and possessions.*"

I generally agree to the doctrines taught in these clauses. But the doctrine taught, and the practice which ought to

follow, is very different indeed from the practice pursued by many ministers and churches, which adopt this Westminster Confession as the profession of their Faith. Thus, this Chapter acknowledges the obligation to meet in communion, and in the worship of God, all saints by profession —*i.e.*, all professing Christians. Yet many ministers and many religious sects—for I cannot call them churches—refuse to admit to their communion any who do not belong to the paltry narrow-minded sect to which they belong. This practice is unquestionably contrary to Scripture, and makes that bigoted set of individuals not entitled to the name of "a church." For what is the difference between *a church* and *a sect?* A Church makes faith in Jesus the sole terms of Communion. A sect makes some other doctrinal and very secondary point its terms of communion. By this test then may each Religious denomination be tried.

The third clause here is the second instance in which we meet with a denunciation or curse pronounced against all those who shall dare to differ from the statement laid down in that clause. This want of Christian charity causes me to be suspicious that the assertion made in that clause has no support from Scripture, and requires to be closely looked into.

The words which rather startle one are these: "This Communion which the Saints have with Christ doth not make them to be equal with him in any respect—which to affirm is impious and blasphemous." If one person is declared to be one with another, I rather suspect that, in plain English, it means that *these persons are equal in some respect.* Such a conclusion the Westminster Divines drew, in a former chapter, from the words, "I and the Father are one." Let us see then whether these charitable divines do not here affirm that both Jesus and Paul make statements which they dare to characterize as impious and blasphemous.

Jesus said, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." John xvii. 11. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." John xvii. 21. Paul says something even stronger than this, for he says, "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." 1 Cor. vi. 17. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one." Heb. ii. 11. And there are many similar passages. Notwithstanding the above denunciation, therefore, on those who dare to think differently, I prefer to follow Jesus and Paul rather than the uncharitable Westminster Divines; and judge that the above clause must be altered to bring it into conformity with the Scriptures; and its denunciations withdrawn as quite unbecoming in a Creed professing Christianity.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OF THE SACRAMENTS.

1. "*Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him; as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word.*"

2. "*There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.*"
3. "*The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution; which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.*"
4. "*There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord; neither of which may be dispensed by any but a minister of the word, lawfully ordained.*"

In this professedly Protestant land we are nearly as completely hoodwinked by the clergy as in Roman Catholic countries; and take all their expositions with as believing a faith as if they really were the word of God. This is the reason why people dare not think for themselves upon religious matters, and profess belief in a creed which few of them have read, and far fewer still have ever endeavoured to understand. The clergy have hence succeeded in investing what are called "the Sacraments" in a profound mystery, as unlike the freedom and revelation of the Gospel as it is possible to conceive.

Now, what does the word "Sacrament" mean? Few will believe that there is no such word in the New Testament, and fewer still will credit that the word has no connection whatever with Christianity, but was the old Roman word for the military Oath of fidelity which every

soldier was obliged to take. The fact is, the word "Sacrament" seems first to have been used by those old Commentators styled "the Fathers," who lived in those corrupt ages of the Church when a false philosophy was employed in interpreting the Scriptures, and who adopted the old heathen notion that no religion could exist without its *sacred mysteries*. They therefore adopted the word "Sacrament" to express for the Christian religion, that which the word "sacra" (sacred mysteries) expressed relative to the heathen mysteries. Hence with them the word "Sacrament" meant all the sacred mysteries of the Christian Religion, and included, as the chief of these, the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Incarnation, as well as all those now known as the seven Sacraments of the Romish Church, and a great many others.

For the sake of Christianity, it is a great pity that such a word was ever used; and though the Reformers limited that word to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, their adoption of it even for these showed how confused were their notions of these ordinances; and that they were unable to throw off much of that Superstition which the Romish clergy had succeeded in winding around these ordinances, so that they still regarded them as "mysteries."

Don't let us, however, in this Protestant land, allow ourselves to be led away with a name, or regard as a mystery things which are no mysteries, but are simple and intelligible Christian ordinances.

Let it be distinctly understood that, in the New Testament, the term "mystery" is never applied either to the Lord's Supper or to Baptism. It is nowhere even hinted that they partake of the nature of a mystery. They are solely talked of as Christian ordinances, to be used as signs to mark our Christian profession. This omission to term

these ordinances "mysteries" cannot be fortuitous; for several things are termed "mysteries" in the New Testament. Thus the Incarnation is termed a mystery; so is the sudden change which the living shall undergo when the last trumpet shall sound; so is the marriage union, as to how two persons can be "one flesh." But such a term is never applied either to Baptism or the Lord's Supper; so that it may fairly be concluded that they are no mysteries, but belong to that class which Paul so repeatedly assures us "are now revealed."

With the above explanation, then, these clauses of the Confession must be read, with the distinct understanding that the only two sacred ordinances which we acknowledge, viz., Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are simply signs whereby we mark that we are Christians, and partakers of the Covenant or Testament of Grace; Baptism taking the place of "the sign of circumcision" under the First Covenant; and the Lord's Supper taking the place of the Feast of the Passover, and being like it a commemorative rite.

The third clause very properly states that the efficacy of the Sacrament dependeth not on the piety or intention of him that doth administer it. This was necessary to state in a Protestant Confession, seeing that the Roman Catholics declare that if the Priest withholds the intention, it is no sacrament at all. A Roman Catholic, therefore, can never be sure that his child has, according to his church's creed, been truly baptized, or that he himself has truly partaken of the Lord's Supper; or that, when he bowed in worship to the Host (as the consecrated wafer is termed), he was not worshipping a common piece of bread.

The Fourth clause declares that "there be only two sacraments." That of course depends entirely on what we call "Sacraments," as has already been endeavoured to be shown. If the word be used by the Romish Church in the

sense in which it was originally employed by the Fathers, viz., that of "Sacred Mysteries," then they are quite authorized to hold those seven ordinances to be sacraments which they style such; viz., 1. Baptism; 2. The Eucharist; 3. Confirmation; 4. Penance; 5. Extreme Unction; 6. Orders; and 7. Matrimony. Nay, they may add a good many more to these if they choose. If, on the other hand, the word "Sacrament" be limited to mean "the signs of the Christian Religion which Christ hath specially ordained," then we are restricted to two ordinances alone, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It might, however, be a question, whether to these two ought not also to be added the observance of the Lord's Day, as the sign of the Resurrection of Christ. But as this wants the specification of being specially appointed by Christ, and Paul leaves all Christians free to hold or not to hold one day more holy than another, we are restricted to these two ordinances alone.

As we Protestants, however, alone accept this last meaning of the word, we acknowledge but two ordinances as "Sacraments;" and this very limitation of its meaning proves how very inappropriate is our use of the word, and how very necessary it is that we should drop its use altogether, and substitute for it "signs of the Christian Religion."

The latter part of the Fourth clause says, that "neither of these sacraments may be dispensed but by a minister of the word lawfully ordained." I am not aware that there is a single passage in the New Testament authorizing such a statement; and yet every such statement should be founded on the Scriptures, or it is of no authority or value whatever. The texts quoted by the Confession as those from which that doctrine was drawn, allow of no such conclusions; and the words which seem specially to apply to the case, and to prove it, have no reference whatever to the

subject, but are the most ludicrous misapplication of a text which it is possible to conceive. Thus the main text relied on for proving the point is that fragment of a passage from Hebrews v. 4: "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Now, if any one will take the trouble to read that passage in connection with its context, he will see it has no reference whatever to the Christian ministry. Paul is telling the Hebrews about the Jewish High Priest, and how it was that Christ, though not belonging to the Priesthood of Aaron, became High Priest to us. It has not the most distant allusion to Christian ministers, nor pretends to give any directions as to whether they were to be lawfully called or not.

But to prove that none but a minister of the Gospel may lawfully administer the Sacraments, it would be necessary to prove that Christ or his Apostles said so. Nay, even though it were proved that ministers of the Gospel must be specially ordained before they could be allowed to preach, unless it be distinctly stated in the Scriptures that none but they may baptize, or administer the Lord's Supper, we may infer that all who are Christians are at perfect liberty to administer these Rites whenever they choose.

Let us look at these Rites themselves, and we shall at once convince ourselves, not only that every Christian is at perfect liberty to administer them, but that the New Testament authorizes this, and requires no minister or self-styled priest to be present. The fact is, it is by having had our minds blinded by old clerical superstitions, and fancying that Baptism and the Lord's Supper were holy mysteries, that men have not arrived at this conclusion long ago.

Let us first take Baptism. I suppose no one will presume to dispute the fact that Baptism under the New Testament, supersedes and takes the place of Circumcision under the Old Testament Dispensation. Circumcision was

the sign or token of the First Covenant or Testament, and admitted the Jew to all the benefits of that covenant. Gen. xvii. 11. Baptism is the sign or token of the New Testament, and admits the Christian to all the benefits of the Gospel. 1 Pet. iii. 21; Rom. vi. 14; Gal. iii. 27, etc. Now, the Rite of Circumcision neither took place in the Temple, the Jew's only place of worship, neither was it administered by a priest. The child was reckoned unclean at the age when it was circumcised, and therefore could not be admitted within the Temple; neither could a clean person touch it without being defiled, according to the Jewish Law. The ordinance or ceremony, therefore, necessarily took place in the tent or dwelling of the Parents; and was either performed by the parents or by persons who made it their profession; nay, we have even one notable instance recorded in which it was done by a woman. Exod. iv. 25. When Baptism, therefore, was instituted by Christ as that simple ordinance which was to supersede the bloody rite of circumcision, had any change been intended, either with regard to the place where the rite was to be performed, or in the persons who were to administer it, certain am I that the New Testament would have fully informed us of the change. None such, however, is even hinted at; and I therefore hold it to be demonstrated that no change was intended. The Christian ordinance of Baptism, therefore, is scripturally administered when done by any Christian man or woman in any place where two or three meet together in the name of Christ.

If we look with the most critical eye at the sacred narratives in the New Testament, we shall see nothing to invalidate the conclusion above arrived at, but much to confirm it. Paul himself was baptized by a simple convert to Christianity, and not by an ordained minister or an apostle. When Paul himself travelled from place to place preaching

the gospel, we know from his own statement that he very rarely baptized; indeed, it would appear that he only baptized the first convert, or converts, and employed them to baptize all the rest. Paul justly looked on "Preaching the Gospel" as by far the highest and most important duty of the Christian minister. Nay, in his letter to the Corinthians he thanks God that of them he only baptized Crispus and Gaius; "for," says he, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." 1 Cor. i. 17.

The apostle Peter's practice was in everything the same. Though he preached the Gospel to Cornelius and his family, and was the only minister of the Gospel present, he did not himself baptize them; "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Acts x. 49.

If we pass from the New Testament Scriptures to the earliest recorded practice of the Christian church, we shall find the same fact manifested, viz., that the ministers of the Word, the clergy, were not the persons who baptized converts. This we find was done by certain church officers who were called deacons and deaconesses; who were not ministers of the word at all, but officers whose duty it was to attend to the distribution of the charity among the poor of the congregation, and to baptize, and distribute the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper, and the Love feasts.

But the fact is, the New Testament recognises every Christian as a priest to God. And, if this be the case, every Christian may (whenever he choses to use the liberty of the Gospel which Jesus purchased with his own blood) use all the privileges, and perform all the Rites of the Christian Church. Hear what is written: "Ye also as lively stones are built up an spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter ii. 5. Again: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar

people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Peter ii. 9. Yet again: "Thou hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests." Rev. v. 10. And yet again: "And hast made us kings and Priests unto God, even his Father." Rev. i. 6.

One church—the Roman Catholic—has virtually acknowledged that it is not necessary to have Baptism performed by a minister of the Word, or priest, as they term him; for in the event of a new-born child being likely to die before a priest can be procured, the doctor, or nurse in attendance, is commanded by that Church to baptize the child; and that Baptism is considered by that Church as effectual to salvation as if done by a priest.

Let us now see what light the Scriptures throw on that other Rite of the Christian Religion, the Lord's Supper; and whether what is there written regarding it bears out the dogmatic teaching of the Confession, that it also may only be administered by a minister of the word lawfully ordained.

All will allow that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper supersedes and takes the place of the Feast of the Passover. The Paschal Lamb foreshadowed Christ. Jesus instituted this ordinance immediately after eating the Passover with his disciples. The bread and the wine which he used as substitutes for the broken body and shed blood of the paschal Lamb, he commanded to be partaken of as souvenirs of his own body which was about to be crucified, and of his own blood which was about to be shed. How was this Jewish rite of the Passover held?

Though the Jew had a fixed priesthood, and but one Temple for worship, the Passover was not presided over by a priest, neither was it held in the Temple. Each household celebrated that Feast by itself; or if one family were too

small to eat a lamb among them, two or more families united. The feast was therefore held by each family in their own private dwelling, and no priest of any kind was permitted to be present, the head of the family being the priest or administrator of the rite himself. Now it may with great propriety be asked: Did Christ, when he instituted the Lord's Supper, which was to take the place of the Passover in all ages thereafter, command that it should only be administered by a minister of the Word? Not at all. He made no change either in the place where, or in the persons by whom, the New ordinance was to be administered. As the old rite of the Passover was dispensed, so undoubtedly did Christ intend the Lord's Supper to be. In a private room, without a priest or minister of the word, by any, even by two or three, who should meet together in his name. What did our Saviour say? "Do this in remembrance of me." Luke xxii. 19. "Do this as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me; for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. xi. 24–26.

Here, then, there is no limitation as to the place where, or the persons by whom, the rite was to be held. In fact, it was to be of the nature of a feast, where all sit down at one Table, and where, of course, no administrator is required. In the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles we have notices which show that the first converts celebrated that ordinance according to our Saviour's undoubted meaning whenever they partook of food, for it is written: "And they continued daily with one accord in the temple; and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness." Acts ii. 46. So that the original converts to Christianity would appear to have remembered Christ's death every time—as oft as they ate bread, or drank wine.

Now there is not one word in any part of the New Testa-

ment which directs that the Lord's Supper shall be dispensed by a minister of the word lawfully ordained. Every notice of it, and our Saviour's own statement at its institution, as well as the circumstance that it comes in the place of the Jewish Passover, which was dispensed by the people themselves, in their private houses, and without any priest, all show that under the freedom of the Gospel Dispensation, the Lord's Supper is scripturally dispensed by any Christian, in any room, where two or three meet together in the name of Christ.

It is the strong thirst for Power, which the Clergy have always shown, which has caused them to shut their eyes to the above facts. They felt that if they once admitted that both Baptism and the Lord's Supper may be scripturally dispensed by any Christian, their whole power was gone, and they no more had any hold on the people. In all ages they have felt that to threaten to withhold the Rite of Baptism, or to keep back from the Lord's Supper, was the surest way of keeping the people in servile subjection; and the Free Church of Scotland has shown at the present day how strongly she can put the screw on her recreant members through this very means.

We see, however, that neither from analogy, from the old superseded rites of Circumcision and the Passover, nor from any intimations in the New Testament, is there the slightest authority for the statement made in the Confession, that these rites may not be dispensed but by an ordained minister. All such limitations would, indeed, have been opposed to the freedom which we enjoy under the gospel; and we must remember that in our few holy ordinances we must devise no ceremonies, and prescribe no forms, which God himself has not imposed; neither, on the other hand, must we take away anything which he has commanded, or deprive our fellow-christians of any freedom which God has granted.

Do not, however, let me be misunderstood. Though I have convincingly shown that every Christian may, according to the Scriptures, administer the Rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, without the aid of a regularly ordained minister, I do not from that conclude that Ministers of the word are not required. Far from it. I, on the other hand, hold that Ministers of the Word are absolutely required for the preaching of the Word, and for the general ordering of the good of the Church. I am quite of Paul's opinion, that preaching the Word is a far higher duty than administering the Sacraments. Any Christian may do the one, but none can do the other but those who devote time and talents to the study of the Word. The People would soon lose their knowledge of the Word if left without religious teachers; for their ordinary avocations engage so much of their time that they have no leisure so to study the Word as to appreciate its truths aright. Pastors, Teachers, Feeders of the Flock, are therefore absolutely required. All I argue for in the above Remarks is the truth as it is contained in the Scriptures—the liberty which Christ has purchased with his own blood; and we are none the worse for knowing our full rights and liberties as Christians.

5. "*The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New.*"

This may be all true enough for us Christians, who have been enlightened on the subject by the Apostle Paul. We are, consequently, the less excusable if we do not claim the liberty which Christ hath purchased with his own blood; and, following out the analogies of the Old and New sacred

rites, carry out the conclusions arrived at in the remarks on the former clause. We must, however, remember that the Jew never saw the spiritual signification of any of the Mosaical Rites and Ceremonies; and, if we wanted further evidence of that fact, we have it in Paul's Epistles. He found it necessary to explain most particularly to the Jewish convert that all the Rites and Ceremonies under the Law which he had been blindly following, typified something in the Life or sacrifice of Christ. Paul's allusions to their utter ignorance of the spiritual meaning of their law is abundantly evidenced in his writings, and in one place he even says, "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart;" and again, "But their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament." 2 Cor. iii. 14.

This clause must, therefore, have added to it the words: "but were never so understood by the Jew; nor would have been by us Christians, had not the circumstance been revealed to us by the Holy Spirit through the agency of the Apostle Paul's writings."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF BAPTISM.

1. "*Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of*

grace, of his engrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world."

2. "*The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called thereunto.*"
3. "*Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.*"
4. "*Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.*"
5. "*Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.*"
6. "*The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.*"
7. "*The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person.*"

I generally agree to the statements in this chapter; but, as above explained, I find no statement in the Scriptures

which limits the administration of Baptism to a minister of the word lawfully called. If we acknowledge that Baptism takes the place of Circumcision, then it requires no such minister, as I have already fully proved.

As to the form in which Baptism should be administered, my opinion has long been formed, and quite agrees with that which is shortly and well expressed in the 3d clause. The act of Baptism, whether it be done by immersion, pouring, sprinkling, or washing, is purely symbolical; and it is not of the slightest importance in which manner it be done. That to which most passages of Scripture lean is sprinkling, or pouring a small quantity of water over the person. Even when the person was led down to, or even into, the water, all that appears ever to have been done was to raise some of the flowing or running water in the hand, and pour it, or sprinkle it, over the person. For *ceremonial purification*, which Baptism typified, living (that is, running) water was invariably preferred by the Jew, and indeed was essential for some of their ceremonial purifications. This was the reason why John the Baptist resorted to the Jordan, the only permanent running stream in Judea.

The word which we translate "to Baptize," is alone used in the Scriptures to express the ceremonial washings, cleansings, or sprinklings; and never in any one case means immersion of the whole body in water. This is abundantly evidenced in the Scriptures. Mark, in chap. vii. 4, says: "When they come from the market, *except they baptize*, they eat not;" meaning, except they wash their hands. Paul, too, in alluding to the ceremonial sprinklings and purifyings of the Jews, uses this same word to express them; and we know that these consisted chiefly of sprinklings—sprinkling the blood of the victim on the altar and over the people, or dipping a bunch of hyssop in blood and running water, sprinkling that over the person to be cleansed, and

pronouncing him cleansed. Thus Paul says of these Mosaical ceremonies, that they "stood in meats and drinks, and divers baptisms." Heb. ix. 10. Jesus, in like manner, used the word baptism with the meaning of sprinkling. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Luke xii. 50. And that Baptism was undoubtedly his cruel death, when his own blood, trickling from his wounded brow and hands, was sprinkled over his body. To the same effect are Peter's and Paul's allusions to "the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. xii. 24. "Elect . . . unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 2. I have therefore no feelings in common with the sect called "Baptists," who magnify into undue importance immersion of the body under water in Baptism; and who, from mistaking the meaning of the original injunction of our Saviour, confer Baptism on none till they have arrived at the years of discretion.

Permit me very shortly to touch on this subject of adult Baptism. Let it be distinctly understood that Baptism in the Christian Church takes the place of Circumcision in the Old Jewish Church. When under that old Jewish Dispensation persons became proselytes, they were circumcised, no matter how old they were; but all who were born of Parents who professed the Jewish religion (both Jews and proselytes) were circumcised the Eighth day, in order that they might carry the sign that they were members of the visible church.

Now it may be asked, Did Jesus, when he instituted the ordinance of Baptism, supersede this practice? Not at all. His words to his disciples, which the Baptists fail to understand, were, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things

whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. xxviii. 19. This of course means that they were to teach the Gospel to the heathens before they baptized them; but it lays no restrictions whatever on the baptism of their children. If a heathen were once converted to the faith of Christ, and was baptized, he was no longer a heathen and idolater, but was one of the people of God, one of the royal priesthood, one of the Holy people. His children, therefore, were also holy, were also born to all the privileges of the sons of God. "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." 1 Cor. vii. 14. "If the root be holy, so are the branches." Rom. xi. 16. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Acts xvi. "It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Matt. xviii. 14. Being, therefore, born one of the sons of God, the Christian parent was bound to dedicate that child to God by sealing it with the sign which Christ had appointed as the sign or mark of the Christian. He was bound to baptize his child as early in life as circumstances permitted. There cannot be the slightest doubt that this is the true idea regarding infant Baptism.

The Fifth clause of the confession rightly concludes that Regeneration is not necessarily tied to the Rite of Baptism; though that doctrine is held by the Roman Catholic, and by her twin sister the Episcopal Church. Such a doctrine is the invention of those Churches which wish to magnify the power of their clergy; which, in fact, wish to uphold the false doctrine that the ministers of the Christian religion are "Priests"—a body of men which cannot exist in any Christian church, although both Roman Catholics and Episcopalians falsely style their ministers "Priests." These men, to uphold their influence, claim to possess a power which they would withhold from the people, whom they

style the Laity. They forget that now that the Jewish Priesthood is abolished, the whole people of God, aye, every Christian, is one of a holy priesthood. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices." 1 Peter ii. 5. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." 1 Peter ii. 9. These men and their Churches wish to claim some fancied power as priests, which, they flatter themselves, other men have not. But the New Testament gives no countenance to any such ideas; and if my explanation of the liberty and power of every Christian to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper be true, which it unquestionably is, it sweeps to the wind every vestige of any supposed greater power in the minister of the word, than resides in every Christian.

Now, if we calmly view the question of regeneration, we shall see at once that Baptism no more infers regeneration than did being born and being circumcised as a Jew. The rites in both cases were merely the signs whereby they were admitted to the visible church, and were brought within the means of salvation. Neither the one rite nor the other was a mystery; but both would have been mysteries if they involved regeneration. Each was but the sign of the Covenant to which it belonged; and the being sealed with that sign simply inferred that they were nominally admitted to the privileges of the Covenant. In the discourse which Jesus had with Nicodemus, he clearly points out that regeneration depends on belief, not on Baptism; and he announced it to Nicodemus in these memorable words: "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John iii. 15 and 16. How men have failed to see this, and have deluded and puzzled themselves with making mysteries where God made none, I cannot presume to explain.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1. "*Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in his church unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body.*"
2. "*In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the quick or dead; but only a commemoration of that one offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross, once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the Popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.*"
3. "*The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.*"

4. "*Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise the denial of the cup to the people; worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use; are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.*"

5. "*The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.*"

6. "*That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called Transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament; and hath been and is the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.*"

7. "*Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.*"

8. "*Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward*

elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto."

Though I give a general assent to the above clauses, there are many points on which I think the Confession is not quite correct, and that its statements require amendment.

First of all I must refer to my Remarks on Chap. XXVII. for some important facts relative to the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It is there proved that it supersedes, and comes in the place of the Jewish Passover; and as that Rite was neither administered by a priest, nor in the Temple, but by every Jew in his own dwelling, it follows as a clear deduction of reason, that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper neither requires a minister of the Gospel to administer it, neither does its celebration require to be confined to the walls of a church building.

That conclusion, however, is far from supporting the superstitious practice of administering "the Mass," as the Papists term it, to a dying person, and against which practice the 4th clause was intended to protest. Both in practice and by the Laws of the Presbyterian Church, however, this clause is made to include something very different, viz., it is interpreted to forbid celebrating the Lord's Supper anywhere but within a church building.

If the Westminster Divines, however, had possessed right views of the ordinance, they would have acknowledged that it was right to administer the Lord's Supper wherever two

or three met together in the name of Christ, whether that was on a hill-side, as in the days of the old persecuted Covenanters, or in a private room; and whether a clergyman were present or not. Private Communion is not forbidden in the New Testament. The New Testament nowhere limits the size of a congregation. Our Lord and Head assures us that wherever two or three meet together in his name, there He will be present; and if the Great Head of the Church is present, there all the Rites of the Christian Religion may be scripturally administered. Besides, there is a peculiar propriety in celebrating this Rite to the members of one family, and in private dwellings, because that was its original intention: it superseded a Rite confined to the members of one family, it came in the place of a Rite alone administered in private houses, and which required no priest to conduct its services.

As God is not alone to be worshipped in Temples made with hands—for "God dwelleth not in Temples made with hands," Acts vii. 48 and xvii. 24;—as all that God asks is that we worship in spirit and in truth, John iv. 23;—as Jesus promises to be present wherever two or three meet together in his name, Matt. xviii. 20;—as the Rite of the Lord's Supper comes in the Place of the Passover, a Rite held in a private house, by the members of one family, and without the aid of any priest;—the Protestant Presbyterian Church is decidedly wrong, and acting contrary to Scripture, in forbidding what they term "Private Communion." If our Church recognises the New Testament as the revealed word of God, and what is there stated as her sole laws, then she must allow the whole rites of the Christian religion—Preaching, Praying, the ordinances of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper—to be administered wherever two or three meet together in the name of Jesus. No holiness is attachable to the building. The building is

not the Church, though by a fiction we term it such. It is the congregation of professing Christians who form the Church; and that is a perfect Church wherever the Great Head of the Church is present. Jesus never for one moment limited the size of a congregation; but proved to every thinking mind that he was indeed instituting a religion fitted for every possible phase of human life when he declared, that that was a church, that a congregation in the true sense of the word, wherever even two or three met together in his name.

Even if we adopted the clerical idea (which is not, however, the Scriptural one), that a congregation is not a church unless it has a minister of the gospel present, still the same general conclusion would be arrived at—viz., that wherever two or three meet together in the name of Christ, *along with a clergyman*, there all the Rites of our most holy faith may be celebrated, whether the place be a private room, or the concealed cave, or the barren moor. We have already seen that Paul held preaching to be a far higher duty than Baptizing; and there can be no doubt that he held the administration of the Lord's Supper in the same category. We know for certain that the whole Apostles held this view; for it is recorded, "Then the Twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, *and serve Tables*." Acts vi. 2.

But the ministers of the present day, entirely ignorant of the facts above noticed, and prejudiced to the utmost, having still some lingering notions as to the Lord's Supper being some sacred mystery, oppose what they term "Private Communion," because it formed one of the notorious "Perth Articles," as these are termed in History. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, of course, denounced these Articles; and to have done anything else *at the time*,

would have been criminal. But the truly objectionable clause in these Articles, and that which alone caused the whole Protestant Spirit of Scotland to boil over with indignation, was the order *to receive the Communion kneeling*,—thus signifying that they bowed down in worship to "the Host," as the consecrated wafer was called. All acquainted with the history of the period know that this is the true account of the matter; and it is still further evidenced by the fact that others of the Perth Articles received almost universal assent; and one of them—viz., permission to celebrate Baptism in private houses—so commended itself to the common sense of both people and clergy, that it became the custom in Scotland from that day.

Now, just permit me to ask whether there is anything in the nature of the one ordinance (the Lord's Supper) which can make it unlawful to administer it in private houses, while it is lawful to administer the other? Both ordinances take the place of Jewish Rites administered in Private Houses, and by persons not priests; and it would be difficult indeed to find any substantial reason for confining the celebration of the Lord's Supper to the building called a church, and limiting its administration to an ordained minister.

There is no authority in the New Testament for the statement made at the close of the 2d clause, that "Christ's sacrifice is the alone propitiation for all the sins of the Elect." It has already been satisfactorily proved in the remarks on Chap. X., that Christ's sacrifice was for the sins of the whole inhabitants of the world, and not for those of the Elect only. To that chapter we refer. Here need only be quoted one passage which of itself suffices to condemn the statement in the Confession: "And he is the Propitiation for our Sins (*i.e.*, the Christian's, or the Elect's sins), and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 John ii. 2. The words of that clause must therefore be altered to that effect.

To the first three clauses, then, of this Chapter, amended, as I have shown they must be, according to the preceding remarks, I agree. These profess, and such is my belief, that this ordinance was instituted by Christ; that it was intended to be observed by all believers in Jesus till the end of the world; that it was intended to keep up a perpetual remembrance of his dying love; that it is therefore a purely commemorative Rite, and has nothing of the nature of a Sacrifice; that it is, in fact, a renewal of our allegiance to our great Head and Master—an acknowledgment on our part that we are of the family of God—a recognition of all our fellow-Christians as brethren, and members of the same family. That we therefore sit down together to this Spiritual feast in communion; and thereby bind ourselves to love and assist them as brethren.

The second clause properly declares that the Lord's Supper is a commemorative ordinance, and is, therefore, not of the nature of a sacrifice; while the 6th clause is merely an amplification of that declaration. But even the Westminster Divines had some lingering mystical notions relative to the Lord's Supper, and did not clearly see it to be only a commemorative rite, else they would never have styled it "holy mysteries." Let us see what light the Old Testament throws on this subject. The Feast of the Passover, which the Lord's Supper supersedes, was a purely commemorative rite to the Jew. Paul has taught us Christians that it had a double meaning, in that it was also a type of Christ's sacrifice; but to the Jew it had nothing of that, but was a rite purely and solely commemorative of the escape from the destroying angel and from Egyptian bondage. "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall

say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." Exod. xii. 26. From that fact it may be argued, if argument were needed, that the Rite which now supersedes the Passover will be a purely commemorative ordinance also. And as all bloody sacrifices were to cease with the Mosaical Laws, so the sacrificial typicality of the Passover ceased also on Jesus himself becoming the Sacrifice, and instituting that bloodless ordinance which was to supersede it. The only thing left, therefore, was the purely commemorative rite of breaking bread and drinking wine, "in remembrance" of the one sacrifice which Jesus offered of himself as our Paschal Lamb.

The statements in the second clause are principally made with the view of opposing the Roman Catholic heresies relative to "the sacrifice of the Mass," as they term their mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper. The word "Mass" is merely the old English word, meaning "a body," implying the body of Jesus; and the Roman Catholics term it "a sacrifice," because they aver that every time they celebrate the Mass, they offer his body as a fresh oblation and sacrifice to God. It need scarcely be told any one who knows the Scriptures that all this is utterly opposed to their teaching. See how strongly they are opposed to any such superstitions: "Who needeth not daily, as these high Priests, to offer up sacrifices first for his own sins, and then for the people's; *for this he did once when he offered up himself.*" Heb. vii. 27. "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, . . . for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; *but now once* in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. ix. 25, 26. "So Christ *was once offered* to bear the sins of many." Heb. ix. 28. "This man, after he

had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Heb. x. 12.

But one error leads the Roman Catholics into many others. As they thus find a sacrifice, they must have Priests to offer these sacrifices or masses; so, in opposition to the whole ideas of ministers of the Gospel as made known to us in the New Testament, they style their ministers *Priests*. Paul says a High Priest must of necessity have somewhat to offer; so now that the Papists fancy they have got a sacrifice for their ministers to offer, they style them *priests*. By what obliquity of reasoning the Episcopalian Church retains the same name for their ministers, it is difficult to conceive: very likely they retain some lingering ideas that the administration of the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice; for they style the Table "the Altar," and cause the communicants to receive the elements kneeling. Away with all such dangerous meddling with edged tools. In the Christian Church there can be no Priest, because there can be no sacrifices but that which every Christian is his own priest to offer,—viz., the sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart. But the Romish Church, as they must find some sacrifice for these ministers to offer, in order to make him a Priest, aver, contrary to the Scriptures, that every time their priest consecrates the wafer it turns into the very body of Jesus, which he then offers as a fresh oblation, offering, and sacrifice for the sins of the people, and calls on all the people to fall down and worship it.

We Protestants, following the Scriptures, deny all this. *First*, because we have no Priests, and need none; every man being one of a holy priesthood, and requiring no priest but Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest of our profession. *Secondly*, because Christ's sacrifice of himself once for all taketh away the sin of the whole world, so that no fresh sacrifice of Christ is needed. *Thirdly*, because

the Lord's Supper is a purely commemorative ordinance, intended to bring to our minds the *death* of Christ, just as *the Lord's day* brings to our remembrance his *resurrection*. *Fourthly*, because this ordinance requires no priest or minister for its administration, seeing it takes the place of the Jewish Passover, which was celebrated in a private house, and by the members of each household, without any priest.

It is to be remembered that when Jesus instituted the Supper, he did not say, "Let the Priest offer my body and blood afresh every time you break bread and drink wine;" but he said, "Do this in remembrance of me," that is, break bread and drink wine. There can therefore be no change in the nature of the Elements. We are not commanded to break his body afresh, but to break bread "in remembrance" of his broken body. No transubstantiation can therefore occur, for none is required. The language which our Lord uses, when in his discourse recorded by John he insists on the disciples eating his flesh and drinking his blood, is purely figurative. It was the usual manner in which the Jews expressed themselves. Thus Jesus himself said, "I am the door;" "I am the Vine;" "This cup is my blood;" and the Scriptures are full of similar passages, as, "God is a rock," "God is a shield," "All flesh is grass," "Your life is a vapour," etc., etc.

But Jesus himself left us in no doubt as to the figurative nature of the language he had been using in his discourse about his disciples eating his flesh and drinking his blood; for his language on that occasion was so strong that even his disciples scarcely knew what to think, and it is recorded that many disciples forsook him for his sayings; but he calmed the minds of his chosen twelve by telling them that his words were figurative, saying: "*The words that*

I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." John vi. 62.

Were we at any loss, however, as to what our Saviour really meant by the words which he used in instituting the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the conduct of the disciples would enlighten us, as that showed clearly their understanding of his words. One of the most binding laws of the Jews, and one which the remnant of that race observe most rigorously to this very day, is the prohibition to eat blood. "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Gen. ix. 4. "Whatsoever man there be of the House of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth among you, that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people." Lev. xvii. 11. "Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off." Lev. xvii. 14.

This being the strict Jewish Law given by God himself, is it conceivable that Jesus, the Son of that God, who came to fulfil his whole law, would direct his disciples to break that Law by drinking his own blood? Is it conceivable that, if the disciples understood Jesus to say that the wine was turned into blood, they would have drunk it? Would they not have turned from it with horror and disgust? Would they not have asked Jesus what he meant by offering to them, who were strict Jews, a drink of which, if they dared to partake, God had assured them in his Law that he would cut them off from the land of the living?

Now what clearly proves that they understood Jesus to speak of the bread and wine *as mere symbols* of his broken body and shed blood, and his whole language as figurative, is the fact that they neither exhibited repugnance to drink the wine, nor asked explanations as to how the wine could

be called his blood, when they saw him standing before them with his body whole, and his blood unshed. They had the evidence, besides, of their senses, that the bread was bread, and the wine, wine; and if any one of us leaves the evidences of his senses, he has nothing else to guide him in this world. The above argument, then, is quite decisive of the absurdity of the transubstantiation theory.

Other arguments might be used to show the absurdity of the transubstantiation theory. The Romish Church found greatly on the literal meaning of the words. Well, if, for the sake of argument, we were to take the words literally, then we must keep strictly to them; in which case it would appear that it was not the wine which was the symbol of his shed blood, *but the Cup;*—it was not the wine which was to be drunk, *but the Cup!* There is no getting over this if, as the Romish Church says, we are to read the words literally. "He took *the Cup* when he had supped, saying, *This Cup* is the New Testament in my blood. . . . . As oft as ye eat this bread, *and drink this cup.*" 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26. But why multiply arguments on such a subject? Our Lord's disciples made no mistakes, exhibited no repugnance to drink the wine, and asked no questions, well knowing that no mystery was contained either in his words, or the elements they were using. The doctrine of Transubstantiation is therefore utter and absolute nonsense, and the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass actual blasphemy.

In the 5th clause a most absurd phrase is used, as it appears to me. It says: "The outward Elements are truly, yet sacramentally only, called by the names of the things they represent." This is utter nonsense. They might just as properly have asserted, that Jesus was truly a door, that the disciples were truly salt, and that flesh was truly grass.

Our Westminster Divines, for all their protestations against the Popish doctrines of transubstantiation, etc., seem to have had some strange lingering mystical notions regarding the exact nature of the Lord's Supper, as clearly appears from their styling it a holy mystery—"cannot without sin partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto;" and also by styling it a "spiritual oblation."

Now if the Lord's Supper be clearly a purely commemorative ordinance, then it can be no mystery. But if it be a sacrifice, and oblation, and the elements be changed into flesh and blood, then it is a mystery. But the fact is, the Westminster Divines could not shake off all their old prejudices relative to that ordinance, though they were able to see that much of the Romish practice and doctrine had no authority in the word of God. They were left in a maze regarding it; and these words show clearly they still had lingering doubts regarding it. The word mystery, means a thing hid from us. The word of God, as revealed to the Jew, was in great part a mystery to him, but it is no longer a mystery to us. But the Westminster Divines did not understand the meaning of the word, though Paul explains it. "Whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the *mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.*" Eph. iii. 4, 5. And again: "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, *but now is made manifest to his saints.*" Col. i. 26. Of course, that is no mystery which is revealed. But nowhere does Paul, or any one of the Apostles, talk of the Lord's Supper being in the slightest degree a mystery; and this phrase must, therefore, be expunged from the Confession.

The next thing I find fault with in the 8th clause is the statement that ignorant men cannot, without great sin,

partake of the Lord's Supper, or be admitted thereunto. This is going as far nearly as the Old Puritans and the Independents; but it is going a length for which I find no authority in the word of God. Men may be very ignorant, yet believe in the Saviour; and if they do so, I find no authority given in the Bible to any Church, or to any class of men, to keep back such persons from the Lord's Table. If they are very ignorant, it is the bounden and special duty of the minister to enlighten their ignorance, and encourage them to come forward and commemorate their Saviour's dying love; and I find no authority in the New Testament constituting any man, or any minister the judge of who shall, and who shall not, join in that sacred Rite. The words of Paul are very explicit on that very point. He does not say, "Let the minister or elders examine you;" but he says, "Let a man examine himself." 1 Cor. xi. 28. I therefore think the Church of England acts in the only Christian spirit in admitting to that holy Rite all who are willing to offer themselves. On the other hand, I hold that the Church of Scotland, but more especially the Purists, Baptists, Independents, Free, and other sects, act contrary to Scripture, and most erroneously, in insisting on a rigid examination of the Communicants; and are guilty of a great sin in daring to keep from the Table of the Lord all of whom they do not approve.

More than this, I hold that any Christian, no matter to what sect or denomination he belongs, may, without sin, join in communion with any congregation of Christians. His doing so is not only not violating any law of God, but is in strict conformity with one of the very objects for which that Rite was instituted. His doing so acknowledges these Christians as brethren, and Jesus as their common Head and Lord. His doing so does not homologate any of his own peculiar views as to Church Government, or

doctrine, with that of the church with which he communicates. He meets his fellow-Christians on the common ground of belief in Jesus Christ as the Lamb slain for us, belief in Jesus as the sole propitiation for our sins, as the one only Mediator or Intercessor for all mankind. He sits down at the Lord's Table as a member of that one Church of which Jesus is the Head, and of which all other Churches are but branches, bearing more or less, finer or coarser, plumper and jucier, or drier and more withered fruits.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF CHURCH CENSURES.

1. "*The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.*"

No body of men can exist without rulers of some kind; and therefore it was necessary that rulers should exist in the church. As it might happen, and often has happened, that the Civil rulers have been heathens, it was necessary that the rulers of the Church should be distinct from the Civil Magistrates, and that their jurisdiction should be confined within the Church itself. If, however, we take the early church for our model, I suspect we shall find that the whole powers were exercised by the members of the church at large, and not by its ministers or officers. For instance, Paul, in addressing the Church at Corinth relative to the incestuous person, does not tell the Bishops or Elders to

deliver over the guilty member to Satan, but he tells "the Church," that is, the whole members of the Church, to do that thing. Then, again, Jesus, in the express directions which he left as to how an offending member was to be treated, gave no power to the Church-officers or rulers, but gave the whole power of censuring to the members of the church itself. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, ... And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Matt. xviii. 15.

Originally, even the officers of the Church were chosen by the members of the Church; and after being selected for the office by the members, were appointed, or what we would call were ordained, or consecrated, by the Apostles. "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." Acts vi. 3.

As, however, Church, like Civil Government, is to be so conducted as shall best promote the interests of its members, it is of really very little consequence whether the power resides in the whole body of the members (when the form would be republican), or in the officers in a body (when the form would be oligarchical), or whether it be concentrated in the highest member of the ministry (when the form would be monarchical or Papistical). Whatever form is best administered is best; and the three several forms seem suited to the particular notions as to civil government which may prevail with the people among whom they are exercised.

2. "*To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power*

respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require."

This is a most questionable clause, and its whole statements founded on a misinterpretation of certain passages in Scripture. At the time when the Confession was drawn up, the clergy had far too much power, and lorded it over the consciences of the multitude. They interfered in everything; and thus prostituted to the most unworthy ends the sacred ministry to which they had vowed themselves. At the same time they strained every nerve to secure, and retain, as much power as the Civil authorities would yield up to them. When the possession of power, therefore, was concerned, they willingly put such an interpretation on any passage of Scripture which seemed to favour their ambitious claims, as would convince the ignorant public that they were only claiming a right granted them by God. More especially was that celebrated passage relative to the keys of the kingdom of Heaven diligently perverted in its meaning, as if it gave them a commission or power (a power which every church has in succession claimed) to support their unholy ends; a power which no church has, nor can have, as we shall make very apparent.

The clergy have in all ages been very desirous to convince an ignorant multitude that they possessed powers from on high to pardon and remit sins, to admit to or withhold from the kingdom of Heaven; so the officers or rulers of each successive Church have in turn misinterpreted and misapplied the words which our Saviour addressed to Peter, so as to make them appear to justify their arrogant and blasphemous pretensions.

If this talked-of "Power of the Keys," as they term it, had been a power intended either for the Church, or for the officials of the Church, it would have been conferred on all the Apostles. But the conclusive fact, that it was alone conferred on Peter, at once puts an end to any such claims either from the Church or her officials or rulers; for the very fact of its being limited to Peter demonstrates that the words had reference to him alone, and neither to the other apostles, who might be supposed to represent the clergy, nor to the Church at large. Look at the words: "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

These words were addressed to Peter alone, and were intended to confer some honour on him not given to the other apostles, in consequence of his being the first to make the Confession, which is the basis of our Christian Faith, that "Jesus is the Son of the living God." If we, therefore, take the trouble to examine the events of Peter's life, we shall fully satisfy ourselves that this honour or privilege granted to Peter was fulfilled, in all its integrity, by Peter during his life; and was, therefore, nothing which could be handed down to any successor of his in the ministry, neither could it be conveyed as a legacy either to the Church or to its rulers.

The sole use of Keys is to open doors; and in the above quoted passage our Saviour is using figurative language—the language of parables, that in which he most commonly preached, and instructed both his disciples and the multitude. When Peter, therefore, was the first of his disciples

who openly recognised Jesus as the Son of the living God, Jesus told him that for that Confession, which was the rock on which his church was to be built, he would be honoured above the other Eleven, in that to him would be entrusted the special honour of being the first of the apostles to open the doors of the kingdom of Heaven to true believers; in other words, that he was to be first of the Apostles to admit both Jews and Gentiles to the visible Church. Accordingly we find that it was Peter's preaching which *first*, after the Resurrection, admitted three thousand Jews and proselytes to the visible Church on the day of Pentecost; and it was his preaching also which admitted the first Gentiles to the Christian Church, in the case of Cornelius and his Family. The Commission of the Keys (not the *Power* of the Keys as it is perverted to mean) was thus once and for ever fulfilled, and brought to an end, in Peter's own person, and during his life; and no other Apostle, no successor, no church, no man whatever, could use the figurative keys which Christ for a short space entrusted to Peter alone of all the apostles.

All clergy talk of this Commission to Peter as "the Power of the Keys;" but there is not the slightest countenance to such a perversion of the words of our Saviour in any part of the Scriptures. Jesus gave to Peter the figurative *loan* of the Keys; but he gave no *power* with them, excepting the privilege of admitting persons to the visible Church on earth, and to make regulations for the guidance of that church.

The phrase "Kingdom of Heaven," as used in our Lord's words to Peter, have been completely misunderstood. The clergy apply them to mean "Eternal life with God in the celestial Mansions." Let us see what is their true meaning.

Matthew is the only one of the Evangelists who uses the

phrase "Kingdom of Heaven." All the other Evangelists, and Paul, substitute the words "Kingdom of God." Thus, when Matthew says John preached, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand;" when Mark relates the same event, he says John's words were, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." And it is the same in all other instances. The phrases therefore are perfectly synonymous.

What then do these phrases, "Kingdom of Heaven," or "Kingdom of God," mean in this passage addressed to Peter? If any one reads the Scriptures with attention, he will not fail to arrive at the conclusion, that though these phrases in some few instances allude to the celestial mansions in Heaven, their common meaning, and that which they alone have in the passage addressed to Peter, is "the Gospel of Jesus Christ," or "the Church of God upon Earth." The following passages will make this apparent to the meanest capacity, for they cannot be interpreted otherwise than as meaning "the Gospel," and the word "Gospel" may in every case be substituted for the phrases "Kingdom of Heaven," or "Kingdom of God." Thus:—

"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Matt. ii. 2. "The Kingdom of God is at hand; Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." Mark i. 15. "As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Matt. x. 7. "He sent them (his twelve disciples) to preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." Luke ix. 2. "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you." Matt. xii. 28. "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter therein." Mark x. 15. "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God." Luke ix. 27, and Mark ix. 1. "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. xxi. 43. "The Kingdom

of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 17. "The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." 1 Cor. iv. 20.

In the words of our Saviour to Peter, the phrase "Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" have that limited meaning which we see is plainly declared in all the above passages. Jesus wished to honour Peter for being the first to openly profess his belief in him as the Son of the living God; so he conferred on him the loan of the Keys of the Gospel, that he might be the first of all the apostles who would open the doors of the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles, and be the first to admit them as members of Christ's visible Church. We always forget that "the Kingdom of God," or "the Gospel," did not come into the world till the death of Jesus. See how pointed and explicit are the words used in many of the quotations given above. John only said it was "at hand." Jesus himself told his disciples to say the same. Jesus also averred that some to whom he then spoke would not die till they saw that Gospel or Kingdom of God come; and at the last Supper he told the disciples that he would not again "drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God (the Gospel) shall come." Luke xxii. 18.

With this figurative loan of the keys Jesus gave no power to retain or forgive sins. He gave no power to keep any one from being admitted to Eternal life in the Celestial Kingdom. He merely gave Peter power to frame rules for the conduct of the Church on Earth. The binding and loosing had sole reference to things, and not to persons. It was not *whosoever*, but it was *whatsoever*. Whatsoever rules you shall make binding on the Church on Earth shall be ratified in heaven; and from whatsoever burdens you shall loose the Church, these shall be loosed by authority from on high.

I consider it, therefore, as almost blasphemy to make such a statement, and put in such a claim for the clergy or ministers, as is done in this clause of the Confession. No fellow-mortal, be he minister, pastor, bishop, or Pope, has any power by the New Testament to retain the sins of a fellow-mortal, or shut him out of Eternal life in the Kingdom of God. The doors of Heaven are opened by the Lord of Heaven, and can never be shut again but by him who opened them. Jesus our Lord and Head has himself authoritatively settled this point: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Rev. iii. 8. And if we take the trouble to read the context, we shall satisfy ourselves that the only person who claims the right to hold the Keys is Jesus himself: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the Key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth: Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Rev. iii. 7, 8.

On this Rock and sure foundation I set myself, and denounce the whole of the above clause of the Confession as claiming a power contrary to the Scriptures. No man hath power to shut out the Kingdom of Heaven from any other; and, as has already been shown, the whole power given to the Church, or its officers, is to remonstrate with the sinning member; and, if he repent not, to expel him from their society.

We must remember, besides, that the power of binding and loosing had no connection whatever with the Commission or Loan of the Keys to Peter. The power of binding and loosing (that is to say, the power of making laws) was by Christ equally conferred an all the apostles: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xviii. 18. This

single fact proves that there was no connection between these two things; for all the apostles had the privilege of binding and loosing, but one only had the loan of the keys.

Even Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, claimed no such power as our worthy modern clergy—Papists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, etc.—all assert they have; even though in Paul's day the Holy Ghost gave him and the other apostles power to inflict serious bodily diseases, and even death itself (temporal death only), on the sinning member. It was this power to inflict bodily diseases, and even temporal death itself for the temporal sin, to which our Saviour alludes when he said to all his disciples, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." John xx. 23. This, however, was no power which the Church or its rulers were to have in after ages. History tells us that that miraculous power was only present with the Church in its earliest ages, when the Holy Ghost was visibly present directing the Church. That power is now lost. Even when the Apostles and Church had that power, *it only extended to retaining the sin temporarily, and to its temporal punishment.* It never extended to an usurpation of God's own jurisdiction, the adjudgment of an eternal doom. Christ never allowed even his apostles to usurp the privilege of God as to who should, or who should not enter heaven. This was a blasphemous claim only made by the corrupt leaders of the Church in a corrupt age; and this blasphemous claim has been ignorantly, and for selfish ends, borrowed by the clergy of the Modern Churches to enhance their own powers. But even Paul, when he exercised that miraculous power of punishing the sin which he retained, distinctly states that it extended only to the "destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. v. 5. All

that power is now lost; and consequently the only power which the Church, or its officials, now have, is to remonstrate with a sinning member, or expel him from their communion.

3. "*Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from the like offences; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honour of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.*"
4. "*For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season, and by excommunication from the church, according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.*"

These two long wordy sentences, indeed this whole chapter, might have been included in one short Paragraph, stating that Ecclesiastical, like Civil bodies, require officers, and that these must have powers to censure offending members, or even to expel them from the communion of the Church.

Every one would naturally imagine, that in a chapter which professed to treat specially of the powers of the Church or its officers to censure and try its offending members, all the powers which the church or its officers claimed would be fully set forth. Such, however, was not the practice of the Westminster Divines. They well knew

that every one would look specially to this chapter, expecting to find there fully set forth all their claims for power; so their most arrogant claim, and their totally unscriptural one, was made to hide its head in the fourth clause of Chap. XX., a chapter where no one would look for it, seeing it treated of Christian Liberty and liberty of conscience!

This striking fact of itself shows that, while making that unholy claim to persecute offenders by the power of the sword, the Westminster Divines were aware they were making a claim which had no foundation in the Scriptures; else, had they believed that the Scriptures authorized them to make such a claim, they would have been only too glad to have set it forth in this chapter, and paraded the texts of Scripture on which they founded that claim. There cannot, therefore, be the slightest doubt that I have properly characterized that claim, as unscriptural and false; and that the whole power which any Ecclesiastical body has by the Scriptures, is, as expressed in the above clauses of this chapter, simply to remonstrate with him, and if he won't listen to their remonstrance, to expel him from their communion. But even in that case he is not to be treated as an enemy, but as an erring brother, for whom they are to pray.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF SYNODS AND COUNCILS.

1. "*For the better government, and further edification of the church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called Synods or Councils.*"

2. "*As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion; so if magistrates be open enemies to the church, the ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies.*"
3. "*It belongeth to synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the publick worship of God, and government of his church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in his word.*"
4. "*All synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as an help in both.*"
5. "*Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs, which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition, in cases extraordinary; or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate.*"

I have few remarks to make on this chapter. But I protest against receiving any decision of any ecclesiastical

body of men with a bit more reverence or submission than the decisions of any other body of men whatever. Why should I receive their decision with more reverence, simply because they claim powers which they cannot prove they possess, and affect to be moved by a Spirit which their whole proceedings prove they do not possess? Be they ministers of a Presbyterian Church, or the highest dignitaries of the Romish or Episcopalian Churches, they are but men, having neither more nor less of the Holy Spirit to guide them than any other body of men; and certainly far less likely to read the word of truth aright in any disputed controversy, seeing they are interested parties, and read and decide with a prejudice. Their decisions must therefore be received by all as purely human, and of course fallible, and must stand or fall according to their own merits, not according to their vain pretensions. Besides, their consonance with the word of God is to be judged of, not by the Synod or Council who pronounce the decisions, but by the men who think themselves affected thereby; for we see every day clerical bodies wrongously quoting Scripture, and misapplying it, even as Satan did to our Saviour; and who is there who can reverence any decision come to by such men? The Sabbatarian controversy is a good example in point.

The Fifth clause rightly concludes that all such Assemblies ought to handle nothing but that which is strictly ecclesiastical. I only wish that our Church Courts would remember this, *and act upon it.* I am sorry, however, to say that now-a-days, in Scotland, they are continually intermeddling with civil matters, and in fact are in great part political bodies, utterly forgetful of their ecclesiastical position and duties, and only taking advantage of their position to further their own ends.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OF THE STATE OF MEN AFTER DEATH, AND OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

1. "*The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the scripture acknowledgeth none.*"
2. "*At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.*"
3. "*The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honour, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.*"

This chapter is not consonant to Scripture; and I can imagine that the unscriptural doctrines taught in it were mainly adopted that they might differ as widely as possible from those of the Roman Catholics, not that they might be

conform to the truth. Whatever is the truth, however, is to be maintained, even though some churches may have perverted that truth to unlawful ends, or twisted it so as to seem to bear out their pernicious teachings and practices.

Jesus did not come into this world to reveal to us the mysteries of the world to come; yet, on several occasions, both he and the apostles had occasion to mention certain facts relative to that world, so that we are by no means left wholly in the dark regarding it. Jesus and his apostles, in speaking of the world to come, and of the condition of the souls of men after death, showed that the prevailing heathen notions on the subject were nearly correct, by adopting these notions, and using their general phraseology. That belief was, that after death, the souls of men were confined in a certain place which they styled in Greek "Hades," in Hebrew "Sheol." This word is generally mistranslated in our English Bible, in some cases being translated "the grave," in other places "Hell."

The ancients imagined that in that Hades there were two divisions—the one full of smoke and darkness, in which the spirits of bad men were confined; the other, light and cheerful, in which they considered that the souls of those were kept who had been good and righteous on earth. Our Saviour and his Apostles not only adopted the same phraseology, but in all their revelations on this point, they authenticated the correctness of the ancient belief, wherever that belief had been picked up. Thus, Christ and his Apostles styled the place where the souls of the good are confined till the Great Day of Judgment, "Hades," Acts ii. 27, Rev. xx. 13; "Abraham's bosom," Luke xvi. 22; "Paradise," Luke xxiii. 43, 2 Cor. xii. 4; "The presence of Christ," Phil. i. 23; "Sleep in Jesus," 1 Thess. iv. 14; "Rest in Jesus," Matt. xi. 28, Heb. iv. 3–11; "Rest from labour," Rev. xiv. 13. And they designated the place

where the souls of the wicked are confined till the Day of Judgment, "Hades," Luke xvi. 23, Rev. xx. 13; "Destruction," Phil. iii. 19, 2 Thess. i. 9; "Prison," 1 Pet. iii. 19; "Chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," 2 Pet. ii. 4, Jude 6.

Such is the Scripture statement relative to the places where the souls of the righteous and of the wicked are confined till the Great Day of Judgment. The statement made in the Confession is undoubtedly false—that is to say, it has no support from Scripiure—for it says, "The souls of the righteous are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in Light and glory." It can be quite easily shown that this statement is directly opposed to Scripture, and is a false Protestant doctrine adopted to oppose some of the Popish superstitions. If that statement in the Confession were true, then the Great Day of Judgment would come to every man the moment he died. Every man's day of death would also be his day of Judgment. But the Scriptures are so positive that this is not the case, that there can be no doubt whatever on the subject. The Great Day of Judgment is not to happen till this world comes to an end, when all mankind will be judged at one Great Assize. That day of Judgment, also, is not to come till the souls of men are re-united to their bodies. But, if the statements in the Confession were true, then all the Scripture statements would be false. According to that statement in the Confession, the souls of the righteous immediately enter the presence of God, and behold his face in light and glory. To them, therefore, there could be, no higher bliss in store at the Day of Judgment, excepting in having restored to them their renewed corporeal bodies, without which they had done excellently well, it may be, for thousands of years. The Great Day of Judgment could, therefore, be no Judgment for them.

But that is not the Scripture statement. Scripture continually represents the state of the souls of believers after death, and till the Great Day of Judgment, *as a state of rest*, not a state of active bliss, as the Confession avers. "They rest from their labours." Rev. xiv. 13. "He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works." Heb. iv. 10. "Stephen fell on sleep." Acts vii. 60. "Those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." 1 Thess. iv. 14. "The dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thess. iv. 16. These passages, and many others which might be quoted, prove as clearly as words can, that the dead in Christ are neither enjoying the presence of God, nor yet are they in the highest heavens, as the Confession avers. They are in a state of repose, rest, sleep—a state of quiet enjoyment—not of actual bliss, which they would be were they in the highest heavens and enjoying the presence of God. They will, however, be enjoying the presence of Christ, who is the Head of his Church, and has promised to be with his people to the end of the world. But it will probably be only a clearer revelation of his presence than they had in this world, because they still form part of his visible church; but it cannot be the seeing face to face, which will only be consummated at the Great Judgment Day.

Even Paul, who speaks often on this subject, makes no such statement as that in the Confession. He only says, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." Phil. i. 23. Jesus, also, did not say to the penitent thief on the cross, "To-day thou shalt be with me in heaven;" but he said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Luke xxiii. 43. The Scriptures, too, in speaking of Jesus, never say that when the Spirit left the body hanging on the cross, that Spirit ascended to the highest heaven. Far from it. The Scrip-

tures distinctly declare that the Spirit of Jesus, like the Spirits of men, whom he came to save, descended to Hades, to the abodes of the souls of the dead. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades." Ps. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 27.

Peter, commenting on that passage, in his first sermon at Jerusalem, after the gift of the Holy Ghost, said: "David seeing this before, spake of the Resurrection of Christ, *that his soul was not left in Hades,* neither did his flesh see corruption." Acts ii. 31. But Peter again alludes to the same subject in his Epistles, saying, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by *the Spirit, by which he went and preached unto the Spirits in Prison.*" 1 Peter iii. 18, 19. To convince us that it was really the Spirits of men in Hades which he meant, Peter repeats himself at iv. 6. "For this cause was *the Gospel preached also to them that are dead,* that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." This passage of itself fixes the truth of what I have been endeavouring to prove. The Gospel did not exist till Jesus died. It therefore could not be preached to any man, or to any spirit of man, till Jesus by his death inaugurated it. If the dead then heard the Gospel preached unto them, it must have been preached by some one who could carry the Gospel, the good news of salvation by Jesus Christ, to them. This could only be done by Jesus himself. So that this consideration thoroughly bears out all the conclusions adduced from these quotations of Scripture, and proves that I have given them all these their proper and only true interpretation.

But we have the testimony of Christ himself that the interpretation I have put on the words of Peter is correct; for Jesus, before he suffered, said: "Verily, verily, I

say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, *when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.*" John v. 25. Peter's after declaration is merely confirming these words of our Saviour, informing us how even this (at first sight improbable) prediction was accomplished. The words which Jesus addressed to the thief on the cross, also distinctly prove that neither his own soul nor that of the thief were to "ascend to the highest heaven, there to behold the face of God in light and glory." It was only in Paradise these were to meet. Not in Heaven. And Christ's words to Mary, after his resurrection, imply that the soul or Spirit of Jesus had not been in heaven, wherever it may have been; for he said, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father."

Now, all these passages speak the same language, and allow but one conclusion to be drawn; a conclusion quite at variance with the false teaching of the Confession. They prove that when our Saviour's body was left hanging on the cross, and lying in the grave, that his Spirit, like the Spirits of all men, descended to Hades, the abodes of the Spirits of the dead, and did not ascend to the highest Heaven, nor to the presence of God. Our Saviour's spirit, united with his resurrection body, after forty days' sojourn on Earth, after the Resurrection, ascended to Heaven, and for ever sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

But the soul or spirit of no man ascends to heaven till soul unites with body; and the sure word of Revelation informs us that that does not happen till the Great Day of Judgment. The Apostle Peter gives unanswerable testimony on this point in a passage where he is contrasting Christ with David; and in it directly contradicts the statements in the Confession of Faith. Peter says: "David is

not ascended into the heaven." Acts ii. 34. Now, if David, who had been dead for upwards of eleven hundred years, had not even then ascended into the heavens, it is clear as reason can make it, that neither he nor any soul of man, when they die, are "received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory," as the Confession hath it. Peter's words make it clear as words can, that, at the time Peter wrote, the Spirit of David must still have been in Hades, as the Scriptures unanimously avouch, resting from his labours.

But the Testimony of Christ himself is equally clear; and how dare we overlook his words of Truth! He says: "No man hath ascended up to heaven." John i. 18 and iii. 13. John himself in his First Epistle confirms this teaching of our Saviour, for he says, "No man hath seen God at any time." 1 John iv. 12.

If the Soul of David, then, at the time when Paul spoke, though he had been dead for more than eleven hundred years, was still in Hades, and had not ascended into the heavens, and if there be any truth in these other passages which have been quoted from the Scriptures, then it is demonstrable that when men die, their souls descend to Hades, the abodes of the Spirits, there to rest in Jesus, to sleep, to rest from their labours, till the Great Day of Judgment. To this place it was that Paul desired to depart and be with Christ. This place is also denoted, in Jesus' Parable of the rich man and Lazarus, as "Abraham's bosom:" mark, it is Abraham's bosom, the bosom of a righteous man, not the bosom of God, not heaven. It is this place which Jesus styled "Paradise" to the thief on the cross; not heaven; not the presence of God. This, then, is the place where the righteous go at death; a place essentially of rest, of sleep, of repose, of quiet enjoyment, after the fight and turmoil, and evils of life; a place pro-

bably enlightened with the presence of Jesus, but not with that of the Supreme God and Father of all; a place where the righteous of all ages will meet. But what a different abode it must be, and what a different kind of existence the Spirits must there enjoy, from that state of active bliss which they will afterwards lead in that bright and glorious abode to which they shall be admitted after the Great Judgment Day, when their bodies shall re-unite with their spirits, and they shall join the heavenly train of Jesus, ascend to the highest Heavens, the new Jerusalem, and behold God and the Lamb face to face!

In like manner, the Souls of the Wicked, at death, also descend to Hades; but to that division of it characterized in the Scriptures as a "prison," "chains under darkness, reserved unto judgment." Even to this division did the Spirit of Jesus also descend when his body was lying in the grave, in order that the Spirits lying in prison might have an opportunity of having the Gospel preached unto them, in order that their spirits might be saved in that glorious day when Christ shall gather into one all who believe.

It is very important to look at this subject in its true light, and not according to that false interpretation which modern Protestant prejudice has put upon it. I, therefore, direct especial attention to Peter's words: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which he went and preached unto the Spirits in Prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." 1 Peter iii. 19, 20. This passage, as before shown, is strictly susceptible of no other interpretation than that I have given to it, viz., that the Spirit of Jesus also descended to that division of Hades where the souls of men were confined who

had lived wicked lives on earth. So that Christ by his Spirit both descended to the part of Hades where the souls of the wicked were confined, as well as to that division where were confined the souls of the good.

I am quite aware that Protestant divines love to give another interpretation of the above passage; but their interpretation is quite untenable, and is totally irreconcilable with the grammatical construction of the sentence. Rendered into free English, the sentence would read, "The Spirit of Jesus went and preached to the souls of men in Hades; men who, while on earth, in the days of Noah abused the long-suffering patience of God." By no other interpretation could this passage be brought into harmony with the other passages in Scripture which speak of the condition of the souls of men after death.

It must, besides, be remembered that Peter does not leave the subject, but alludes to it again in a few verses further on, saying: "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." 1 Pet. iv. 6. This is just Peter telling us that Jesus had fulfilled that which he himself, in one of his discourses, predicted he was to do; for Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." John v. 25. Now we know that the Gospel was not, and could not be preached to any one till Jesus came in the flesh. Therefore it follows as a necessity, that if the Gospel was preached to those who were dead, it must have been preached by some one who could by the Spirit descend to their Prisons, to Hades. Jesus in the above quoted passage tells us it was the Son of God who was to preach to these dead; and Peter in the above quoted passage tells us this was really fulfilled by

Jesus himself, who, after being put to death in the flesh, by means of his Spirit went and preached to the Spirits in Prison.

My own impression is, that the reason why the Westminster and all other Protestant divines twist these passages to a meaning which they will not bear, and slur over our Saviour's condition during the period when his body rested in the grave, was from the dread lest they should seem to uphold any part of the Romish doctrine of Purgatory. But the Truths of Scripture are not to be so passed over; but whatever is the truth is to be upheld, even though any particular set of Churchmen may have abused that truth. We are not to pervert the truth even to prevent its abuse. For indeed the true way to prevent its abuse is to know the exact truth. I am clearly of opinion that the Romish Doctrine of Purgatory is wrong, as upheld and acted on by that Church. But I am also convinced it has a solid substratum of truth. But on that solid basis their priests, to magnify their office and enrich their church, have built a monstrous superstructure of falsehood and superstition.

The more that I review in my own mind all the above passages, the more strongly do I become persuaded that it is our duty to pray for the dead as if they were yet living, that their sins may be pardoned. This conclusion is confirmed by finding, from all the passages quoted, that their final doom is not fixed till the great Day of Judgment; and if Christ descended by his Spirit to preach to the souls of the dead in their Prison, during the time his body lay in the grave, that they might live according to God in the Spirit, even though they had been condemned as impenitently wicked in the eyes of men, and for their wickedness were cut off from the earth by a judgment, it surely becomes us to pray for our departed friends and relatives, especially since James commands us to pray for one another, and informs us that

"the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." v. 16.

But the fact is, it is a Scripture doctrine distinctly taught, that the condition of the Spirits of men may be improved after death; even though that doctrine was unknown to the Westminster Divines. Paul teaches it distinctly in speaking of the old worthies who "obtained a good report through faith," and yet "received not the promise;" for he says, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Heb. xi. 39, 40. Some of the old Divines justly interpreted this to mean, that their state as Spirits was imperfect till Christ, at his death, descended by his Spirit to Hades, and there manifested himself to them. The words of Christ, too, are susceptible of no other interpretation, than that the condition of the souls of the dead may be changed on the use of the proper means. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." John v. 25.

Having thus disposed of the question as to the abodes of the Spirits of good and of bad men from the moment of death till the Great Day of Judgment, we shall shortly consider whether the Scriptures give us any information as to where these two parties shall live after that Great Day.

This is very pointedly declared in the Scriptures; so pointedly, indeed, that it is a marvel the Westminster Divines could fail to notice it, as well as the marked difference between the abodes of the Spirits of men before the Judgment, and after it. True it is that the Westminster Divines did recognise that there was to be a Judgment Day, and even made a distinct chapter regarding it; but their prejudices completely blinded them as to the very different places of abode of the Spirits of men freed from

their bodies, to that which they were to inhabit after the Great Judgment Day, when each soul shall again unite with its resurrection body.

Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonians, clearly points out that great distinction: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also *which sleep in Jesus* will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of our Lord shall not prevent (go before) *them which are asleep*. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and *the dead in Christ shall rise first*. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord." 1 Thess. iv. 14–17.

Now this single passage corroborates all the conclusions we have drawn from the other texts above quoted; viz., that the Souls of the dead are not in heaven, as the Confession falsely avers, but are still in Hades, resting, sleeping in Jesus, and remain there till called therefrom by the Trumpet of the Archangel, when they unite with their resurrection bodies, receive their judgment, and ascend with Jesus to the highest heavens. It is only after the Sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and Hades shall deliver up the dead which are in them, that the assembled worlds shall stand before the great white Throne to be judged every man according to his works. Rev. xx. 13. It is only after that Great Assize that the righteous shall ascend with Christ to the New Jerusalem, in which is the throne of God, where they shall behold the face of God, and his name shall be on their foreheads; that resplendent city which the glory of God doth enlighten, where there shall be no night, neither any more death, neither sorrow

nor sighing, nor any more pain; for God himself shall be with them, and be their God, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

The wicked, on the other hand, shall be cast into the "Fire prepared for the Devil and his angels," which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever. This place is termed in the Greek "Gehenna," and its proper translation is "Hell;" the Greek thus carefully distinguishing it from "Hades," the place where the Spirits were confined till the Great Judgment Day.

There is a phrase used in the second clause of this chapter which is nearly unintelligible. It says: "The dead shall be raised with the self-same bodies, and none other, but with different qualities." Paul, who is our authority for all the statements relative to the properties which our corporeal bodies shall have when they rise again, says:

"Some will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what bodies do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him; and to every seed his own body. . . . . So also is the Resurrection of the Dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.* There is a natural and there is a spiritual body. . . . . Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound; and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible

must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." 1 Cor. xv.

This striking passage clearly proves, what indeed must be apparent to common sense, that when our corporeal bodies rise, they can no longer "be the self-same and none other," but must be very different bodies indeed. We have, however, the assurance in the Resurrection body of Jesus, that the incorruptible body will retain the lineaments and features of the natural body, so that friend shall know friend.

In commenting on Chap. II. of this Confession, I had occasion to offer a few remarks on this change from a fleshly and corruptible to a spiritual and incorruptible body. It was shown that, were it the will of God, our present corporeal bodies could, in a moment, without change of form, but merely by the elements of which they are composed arranging themselves differently, be at once transmuted into spiritual incorruptible bodies. It is the principle of Life alone which holds the Elements of which our bodies are constituted in that particular form which we call flesh and blood. When the body dies, the act of corruption is merely these elements disengaging themselves, and going to form new combinations; and, were it the will of God, these elements could be so united as to constitute bodies as visible, as touchable, as solid, as our fleshly bodies, yet be what we term Spiritual;—that is, be invisible to fleshly eyes whenever we pleased, be transportable from place to place by a simple act of volition, pass like the invisible air through the slightest chink, and suddenly appear anywhere as a solid corporeal body.

We have satisfactory evidence that all this can be done, has been done (and, of course, will be done), in the case of the Resurrection body of Jesus. In a moment his resurrection body could *vanish* from the sight. When the doors

were shut, his body stood suddenly in the midst of the disciples, so solid, so corporeal, so capable of being handled, that the disciples not only recognised it was Jesus by the sense of sight, but by the sense of touch also; and so apparently corporeal in every quality, that he actually partook of food with them. Yet the moment the object of his visit was over, he vanished from their sight. What the body of Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, what that body of Jesus is now in heaven, ours will also become. It becomes us, therefore, to treat our bodies as Temples of God. "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the Temple of God, him will God destroy; for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple are ye." 1 Cor. iii. 16.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

1. "*God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.*"

2. "*The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*"
3. "*As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.*"

The sentiments expressed in the above clauses are for the most part agreeable to the Scriptures. It is, however, highly presumptuous in sinful and ignorant man to presume to dogmatize on what he imagines is the end which God had in view in appointing one Great Day for Judgment. Unless God reveals to us the object, or end, he had in view, we have no right to make any assumptions on the subject. The first part of the second clause must therefore be deleted from the Confession.

The first clause I consider to be thoroughly conform to the teachings of Scripture. God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ. If this be true, as has

already been very fully pointed out when commenting on the clauses of Chap. X., then all the statements in the Confession as to Election, etc., are false. If God is to judge men according to their works, no man will be saved by any fancied election or predestination such as that of which this Confession speaks. But God, being a righteous Judge, has declared to us that his judgment is to be guided by the principle of justice, and not by that of favouritism, which the Confession's Election and Predestination doctrines would make it. Hear God's revealed word:

"Then shall he reward every man according to his works." Matt. xvi. 27. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. v. 10. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Eccles. xii. 14. "Every one of us shall give account of himself unto God." Rom. xiv. 12. "Every one shall bear his own burden." Gal. iv. 5. "Every one shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." 1 Cor. iii. 8. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matt. xii. 36, 37. "And another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the Sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." Rev. xx. 12, 13.

These passages clearly prove that there is not a word of truth in all that this Confession says relative to Election, Predestination, and Effectual Calling. In the chapters

treating of these subjects, they asserted that a few persons only, those whom they styled the Elect, etc., were to be saved, and that the whole of the rest of the world were to be condemned to everlasting destruction. But the above passages are the chief of those which relate to the Great Day of Judgment; and with that harmony which pervades the whole of the revealed Will of God, not one hint even is thrown out that the righteous judgment will be deflected to the right or to the left because any man belonged to those styled "elect." All mankind are to be judged by a righteous judgment; and Paul, in his masterly Epistle to the Romans, gives us particulars as to the Judgment of the Great Day which thoroughly harmonize with all the passages quoted, and which thoroughly harmonize with the conclusions I ventured to draw when speaking on the subjects of Election and Predestination. Besides, Paul thoroughly condemns the views of the Westminster Divines in that chapter as to their notions of what are Election and Predestination. If it were such as these Westminster Divines assert, then God would be a partial, unjust God, who had respect of persons, respect of those whom he chose to be Elect; but Paul in that Epistle tells us "there is no respect of Persons with God," Rom. ii. 11; and, consequently, that he will judge Jew and Gentile alike, by a just judgment, according to their works, and according to the opportunities each had, and not according to those he had not.

It was necessary under this chapter to re-notice the subject of Election and Predestination, to show how repugnant is the doctrine relative to these, taught in the Confession, with the final judgment of mankind. I must, however, refer to the Remarks on Chapters III. and X. for the full discussion relative to these subjects.

The second clause contains another objectionable, or rather misapplied phrase. It says that the righteous shall receive

that "refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord." That expression in the Scriptures is limited to that refreshing or strengthening which those shall receive who are under fiery trials or persecutions, and which in their case was much needed. But such cannot apply to the redeemed in Heaven, and such a sentence is quite inappropriate when used in reference to them. They require no such refreshing aid to be sent to them; for they continually see God face to face; he wipes away all tears from their eyes; he continually cheers them with his presence; he dwells among them, and they reign with him for ever and ever.

But I am not done with this Chapter. If the statements in this chapter be true, then the statements in the former chapter, relative to the state of men after death, must be false—as, indeed, we have proved them to be. This very Confession, then, condemns itself, asserting in one chapter that something is true, but which must be false if the statements made in another are to be considered as the truth. In Chap. XXXII. it stated that immediately on death "the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory." That chapter, therefore, assumes that for these persons the Judgment was pronounced immediately on their death, and that they were consequently forthwith admitted to the presence of God. All such assertions are quite incompatible with the idea of a general Judgment. As this last Chapter of the Confession, therefore, holds to the undoubted truths of Scripture, while Chap. XXXII. does not, there is much need for amending the statements in that latter Chapter, as I have shown they must be, in order to bring them into harmony with the revealed word.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CONCLUSION.

Having brought our Remarks to an end, let us for a moment look back and see whether most of the Doctrines which are taught in the Calvinistic exposition called the Westminster Confession of Faith, have not been proved to be at variance with the distinct teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

It was proved that the Exposition of the Confession as to the Inspiration of Scripture is not that taught by the Scriptures themselves; and that the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is opposed to the distinct and direct teaching of the word of God.

It was proved that the Confession misrepresents the character of the loving God and Father of all; and has completely misapprehended the nature of the states which it mystifies with the names of Predestination, Election, and Effectual Calling; in themselves simple and intelligible facts, but made as mysterious doctrines by the Confession as a mystery-loving theologian could desire.

It was shown that the Confession misrepresented the Scriptures when it asserted that they teach that the world was made of nothing, and was only brought into existence some six thousand years ago; for, in so far as the Scriptures are concerned, it was proved that the Earth had existed for millions of ages, and that matter may be as Eternal as God himself.

The Doctrine of Original Sin, as propounded in the Confession, was shown to be opposed to the direct teaching of the revealed word, as well as opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture, as they never represent the original sin of Adam as being imputed to every man.

It was satisfactorily demonstrated that all the Confession's statements as to God's covenants with man were a confused jumble of nonsense, resulting partly from ignorance of what Covenants were, partly from ignorance that the First Covenant was made with Moses and not with Adam, that it was alone made for that small nation the Jews, and that its benefits did not extend to mankind; and from being utterly ignorant when the First Covenant came to an end, and when the New Covenant came into operation.

It was demonstrated from the Scriptures, that what the Confession terms "the Moral Law," which it avers is binding on all men in all ages, was in reality nothing more than the "words of the First Covenant," which was abolished by the death of Jesus.

It was proved that the whole statements of the Confession relative to the Laws of God were misrepresentations of the Scriptures, chiefly resulting from the fact that the Westminster Divines, throughout the whole Confession, constantly jumble together, in inextricable confusion, the Mosaical and the Christian Dispensations.

It was shown that there was no scriptural authority for the unholy persecuting powers which the Confession declares to reside in the rulers of the church; and that the ministers of no church have any more power to forgive sins, or open or shut the doors of the kingdom of heaven, than the poorest Christian or heathen.

It was also proved that the civil power is superior to every ecclesiastical power, in so far as Scripture speaks on such a point, and has alone the power of life and of death.

It was also demonstrated that the whole teaching of the Confession as to the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath-Day, and the mode in which that day should be kept holy, is directly contrary to the express teachings of the Scriptures; and it was shown, that what the Scriptures really do

teach as to the only Christian's holiday, is quite opposed to the observance of a Jewish Sabbath.

It was also pointed out, that the Confession's teaching as to Marriage, Divorce, Oaths, etc., are all in direct opposition to that which the Scriptures really teach on each of these several subjects.

Even with regard to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, it was shown and proved from the Scriptures, that several of the averments made relative to these ordinances were not agreeable to the teaching of the word of God.

And, Lastly, it was convincingly demonstrated that the whole statements of the Confession relative to the state of men after death had not the smallest support from the Scriptures, but were a direct teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Such being the case, it becomes the duty of every Christian seriously to consider what course ought to be followed in order to get this Westminster Confession of Faith amended, and made agreeable to the revealed will of God. It is to be remembered that the Confession of Faith differs from the Creed which any Dissenting Church may adopt, in that it is a Creed imposed on the National Church by the Legislature. It is not a Creed imposed on the church by itself, with power to amend or alter that Creed of itself.

It is quite true that most of the dissenting churches of Scotland have adopted this Westminster Confession as the Confession of their Faith, most of them merely rejecting Chap. XXIII. But all these Churches differ from the Established Church in this, that they don't require to keep that Confession, or any part of it, one day after they discover that any clause contains statements contrary to the revealed word. They can alter, amend, or modify it in any way their church courts please, or they can reject it

altogether. If any minister, therefore, of these dissenting churches becomes convinced that any clause or chapter of that antique Confession is not agreeable to the word of God, it is his duty first to agitate his Church Courts to amend it, or if they persist in retaining it, he has no choice but to resign his connection with that church.

It is quite otherwise, however, with the National or Established Church. It is quite true that she accepted that Confession as her Creed some two hundred years ago, believing it at that time to be agreeable to the word of God. But, even though she could not at that time have accepted all the Doctrines there taught as true, she was obliged by the Legislature to accept that Confession as her Creed, else she could not have enjoyed the position, and the emoluments, and the privileges of the National Church. Even now, though she may be convinced that that Confession has outlived its day of usefulness; though satisfied that it is neither up to the critical knowledge of the Scriptures of the present day, nor yet is agreeable to the revealed will as we now know it; even though convinced that, instead of teaching the pure doctrines of Christianity, it is only teaching the remnants of that old scholastic Philosophy which obscured the truths of Scripture from the Third Century down to this very day, that National Church cannot of itself either alter or amend one clause, without the sanction of the Legislature.

What, then, it may be asked, is the duty of the People and of the ministers of the National Church?

The people are far in advance of the clergy in the knowledge that the Confession in many points teaches error. But as the Confession of Faith is not an inviting study, few have examined it so thoroughly as I have attempted to do; and few are, of course, aware that all its leading doctrines have no support from Scripture, but are the false

inferences of a vain scholastic philosophy, founded on detached passages of Scripture, whose true meaning was misunderstood. The people, however, are quite prepared to give the ministers every possible support and assistance to get the Confession of Faith amended, by aiding them in their endeavours to get the Legislature to appoint a Commission for the revisal of the Religious Creed of the National Church.

The duty of the ministers of the Church, however, requires much more serious consideration.

Every day we read and hear something which proves that, did the ministers of the Established Church dare to speak out, scarcely one who had given any attention to the subject would be found whose faith in all points was the same as that promulgated by the Confession. At the time of life when men enter the ministry, they have not had leisure to think for themselves. Their whole studies, all the books they are permitted to read, or have time to read, are purely Calvinistic. They know they must adopt the Calvinistic Creed, so they embue their minds with it alone, and adopt all the conclusions of Calvinism. Notwithstanding, therefore, occasional stabs of conscience from meeting in the Scriptures with passages irreconcilable with Calvinism, at the time when they enter the ministry, and take their ordination vows, they are, on the whole, firm believers in the truth of the general doctrines taught in the Confession of Faith.

Had I myself been a clergyman, this would have been my own case. After such a study of the Calvinistic Theology as these aspirants to the ministry give it, I was, at the age they enter the ministry, as firm a believer in the general truth of the Calvinistic Doctrines as they; and, indeed, was, at that age, conscientiously of opinion that of all the various Creeds of the leading churches, the Confession of Faith was the one most consonant to the word of God.

Deeper study, and a more perfect knowledge of the Scriptures, has now convinced me I was then wrong. And I have every reason to believe that the same happens, more or less, to every minister of the Church who attempts to advance himself in the critical knowledge of the Scriptures; and who does not remain content with that purely school theology with which he commenced his ministrations.

Is a minister of the National Church, then, bound to resign his living, and to withdraw from that Church, the moment he discovers that his more perfect knowledge of the Scriptures clearly proves to him that one or more of the Doctrines taught in the Confession of Faith are not true? Assuredly no! His Church was established by the Legislature for the express purpose of teaching the Scriptures. That Church's Creed was drawn up with the express object of showing what truths they were which the Scriptures taught. But that work was done by men who could only explain the truths or Doctrines of Scripture according to the light they then had; so both the Legislature which imposed that Creed, and the Church which accepted that Creed, qualified it by saying of it that they "believed it to be most agreeable to the Word of God." When, accordingly, that Church ordains a man to the sacred ministry, the first and most binding oath he has to take, is not regarding the Confession, the work of man, but regarding his belief in the word of God itself. "I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, *and the only rule of faith* and manners." Act of Assem. 1711, 10.

This first oath of necessity rejects as a rule of faith any work of man which may be subsequently imposed on him, if it shall be found that statements are made in it inconsistent with, or which would cause him to break, his first and most solemn oath, and which overrides all the others. This his first oath forbids him to teach for doctrines the

Commandments of men. So that, if he, by his further study of the Scriptures, can clearly prove to himself that the Confession asks him to teach as a doctrine of God that which is opposed to God's revealed will, his sacred oath to the Church binds him to teach alone that which is conform to the word of God.

That same oath binds him to retain his situation as a minister of the National Church; because his Church has no power to alter or amend the Confession of itself; but it also appears to me to bind him to other duties. As neither he individually, nor his church, can alter that National Confession, it is his clear duty to promulgate his views among his brethren; and as soon as he can secure a sufficient number who are satisfied that amendment of one kind or other of that Confession is necessary, he and they ought to bring the subject before the proper church courts, and get the National Church to petition the Legislature to appoint a Commission to revise these national articles of Faith.

In thus agitating among his brethren, he may meet with some who are only enlightened on one point, others on several; nay, it may even happen that out of six individuals none may be agreed on one point, yet each be satisfied that the point he has studied requires amendment. It cannot be doubted that all such ought to unite for the one great end, viz., to get the National Creed brought into conformity with the Scriptures; and were the ministers of that National Church to show moderation towards those of their number whose deeper study of the Scriptures has caused them to perceive more discrepancies than they; and were they to come forward as a united body, and make that request to the Legislature, it cannot be doubted that it would be at once complied with.

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